

SERMONS

Preached on
Several Occasions.

By the Right Reverend Father in God,
THOMAS SPRAT, D. D.
Lord Bishop of *Rocheſter*, and Dean
of *Weſtminſter*.



In the SAVOY:
Printed by and for John Nutt, and for
Charles Brome at the Gun at the West-
End of St. Paul's. 1710.

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Preached on

Several Occasions.



By the Right Reverend
THOMAS HATFIELD, D.D.
Lord Bishop of Rochester, and Dean
of Westminster.



In the SAVOY:
Printed by and for John Widdowes, and for
Charles Johnson at the Gun at the West-
End of St. Pauls. 1710.

CONFIDENTIAL

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A
S E R M O N

Preached before the

K I N G

A T

W H I T E - H A L L ,

December 24. 1676.

St. MARK X. Ver. 15.

*Verily, I say unto you, Whosoever shall
not receive the kingdom of God
as a little child, he shall not enter
therein.*

THese are the Words of our Blessed
Saviour, on occasion of his Disci-
ples forbidding little Children to
be brought to him : Which, it may be sup-
posed, they did in Zeal for the Reputation
of their Master ; believing it to be far
below

below the Dignity of so great and wise a Teacher, to spend Time in instructing of Children; whilst his chief Adversaries the *Pharisees* appear'd in their Synagogues, and most publick Assemblies, and there, with much Pompous Ostentation of profound Wisdom, taught their Men, those that thought themselves, in that Nation, their wisest Men.

But Christ himself understood better the Interest and Power of his own Religion. He knew, that the Design of his Coming into the World was not to continue that Pharisaical, falsely-grave Formality of Life, and Worship, which was then in Use; but to introduce a Rational, Moral, Spiritual Doctrine, and a Plain, Unaffected, Saving Way of Teaching it. He knew, that his Doctrine so taught, was able to convert the most specious worldly Wisdom; or to confound it, if it would not be converted.

St. James
4. 6.

And therefore he took a Course quite contrary to the *Pharisees* Practice, and to his own Disciples Expectations. He taught in the meekest Manner, and refused not the meanest Scholars. *He resisted the proud, but he gave grace to the humble.* The *Scribes* and *Pharisees* he often sharply contradicted; the Multitude he always mildly instructed. By his
different

different Behaviour to the one and the other, he gave evident Proof, that all false Pretences and Affectations of Knowledge, are more odious to God, and deserve to be so to Men, than any Want or Defect of Knowledge can be.

In Prosecution of this most plain and familiar Way of Teaching, whereas his Disciples here would have rejected little Children, he rebuked them, he took the Children in his Arms, he blessed them; for the Innocence of their Age, he gave it many Testimonies of his extraordinary Favour.

Ver. 13,
14.

The first Benefit he did to Mankind in this World, was his becoming a Child. The first Sign he shewed of his own Divine Wisdom, was his disputing with the *Jewish* Doctors, in the Age of a Child. The first Example he gave of Obedience, and that even to the *Jewish Law*, was his being Circumcised, when a Child. And here also, when he would prescribe a Pattern of Evangelical Purity and Humility, he declares, That little Children, and those Men who most resemble their Nature, are not only capable, but most capable of his Heavenly Kingdom.

The Kingdom of God, and Heaven, in the New Testament, is either taken for that Eternal Reward prepared for

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those

those that believe, and obey the Doctrine of Christ, or else for that Doctrine it self revealed in the Gospel : So nearly are the Joys of Heaven and the Laws of Christ united : So surely shall the Possession of the one follow the Practice of the other ; that in the Word of God, they are often both comprehended in the same Phrase of the Kingdom of God.

The Expression of receiving the Kingdom of God as a Child, is best interpreted by our Liturgy in the Office of Baptism ; where it is said, *That by these Words our Blessed Saviour exhorts all Men to follow the Innocence of little Children.*

Whosoever therefore shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little Child, that is, whosoever shall not entertain and practise the Word of God with a true Child-like Simplicity and Innocence, shall not enter therein ; that is, shall not partake of the Blessings of Everlasting Life.

The whole Sense of my Text may be contained in Two Propositions.

The first, That for the right apprehending of the Doctrine of our Saviour's Kingdom, the Gospel, there is required an ingenuous Plainness, an unfeigned Simplicity of Mind, and Understanding.

The

The Second, That, for the sure inheriting of the Joys of that Kingdom, we are all commanded to practise an undissembled Integrity of Life and Manners.

Of these, the first that I am to recommend to you, is that Simplicity of Mind, which is necessary for the right receiving of Divine Truth.

All wise Masters and Teachers, especially if they profess any Art that is deep, out of the Way, and of great Use, are wont to expect in their Followers some preparatory Skill in other lower Arts, before they will proceed to teach them those that are higher. And here you see our Blessed Saviour also requires his Preparations, in those whom he will enlighten with his Heavenly Doctrine: But in a Way how much different, how much more condescending, than that of the Teachers of all Worldly and Humane Arts! For towards the attaining of most profound Wisdom, as is the Knowledge of God; in the most useful Study, as is the Salvation of our own Soul; What Preparations does he exact? Only the Docility, the Innocence, the Simplicity of Children.

But, before we proceed farther, this Christian Simplicity must first be rightly

stated, and well understood : For it has been often mistaken on both Extremes. Some make it to consist in a blind Faith, as the Enthusiasts ; some in a blind Obedience, as the *Papists*. The first conclude from hence for their Wild Illuminations, and Groundless Inspirations, and deny all Manner of Use of their Natural Understandings, and Judgments in Divine Things : The other build on it the Necessity of an absolute Slavery of their Understandings, and Consciences, to their Spiritual Governors : Whereas the true Evangelical Simplicity should keep the sober, middle-way between both these : It is so temper'd, as neither to extinguish the Man's true Natural Light, nor invade the Christian's just Spiritual Liberty.

First, I say, by this child-like Simplicity of Mind, there is not intended any Defect of the natural or acquir'd Abilities of our Understandings ; or any Neglect of employing our Understandings in examining the most Spiritual Doctrines of the Gospel. As God did never require an entire Perfection of Divine Knowledge in any Christian, so much less did he ever enjoin an Imperfection of natural Knowledge in any Saint. 'Tis true, the Things of God must

must be spiritually discern'd : But how so ? Not that they must be discern'd by other Faculties of the Soul, quite different from those by which we discern natural Truth ; but by the same Faculties, only those rais'd, and more spiritually exercised.

Does not the Gospel tell us, *that God* Heb. 12: *is a Reasonable Service* ? It is our most reasonable Duty, we being his Creatures : It is most conformable to right Reason ; it is the most noble Object of it ; it consists in sound, sober, intelligible Doctrines, in plain, practicable, rational Precepts. Of all the Creatures, none, that we know of, are capable of God's Grace and Mercy, and Redemption by Jesus Christ, only Rational Creatures ; not the brute Beasts, that are below our Way of Understanding ; nor Angels, that are above it. And therefore certainly that which does, in some Sense, put Mankind only into a Possibility of being saved, cannot be wholly excluded in the great Work of Salvation. Certainly it is not the natural Weakness of little Children, but their native Candor ; not their Want of Knowledge, but their Docility that is here proposed to our Imitation.

Nor, Secondly, does this receiving the Kingdom of God as a Child, suppose any implicit Obedience, or blind Resignation, of our Understandings to all the Commands and Impositions of any one present Church, or pretended Head of it, as the only infallible Judge of all Matters of Faith.

Obedience is indeed a Virtue most acceptable to God, most beneficial to Men. Unity is one of his greatest Blessings. Communion is the most beautiful Ornament of the Christian Church. And, Thanks be to God, there may be as much Union and Communion amongst Christians, as is necessary for the Being, and convenient for the Well-being of Christianity, without any such Tyranny in the Governors of the Church, or Servitude in its Members : Without enslaving of private Conscience, which is Antichristian ; and only by a moderate governing and restraining of private Conscience, which is most Christian, as well as most essential to the Preservation of humane Society.

The Church has a sacred and venerable Authority, as long as it teaches such Doctrines, and requires such Duties, as are agreeable to our Saviour's. Whilst it does so, much Reverence is due to it,
much

much to the Persons, more to the Doctrines: To the Persons, for their Doctrine's Sake; to the Doctrines, for our Saviour's Sake. But if the Name and Title of the Holy Church of Christ shall be so abus'd, as to impose on our Practice superstitious Precepts, as is the Worship of Saints, and some others; or on our Understandings, incredible, impossible Doctrines, as is Transubstantiation, and the like; in such Cases, you are free by the Laws of God and Man: Your Spiritual Obligations do not bind you to believe such Doctrines, and your Natural Liberty, as well as your Christian, sets you free from obeying such Precepts.

Our Blessed Saviour here expects, that we should receive his Laws as Children, but not as Slaves. Those Laws may be sometimes severe, nay, they are imperial and absolute, as they come from God; for he is our Lord: But even in Respect to him, they are paternal too; for he is also our Father. They are delivered to us with a Royal Power, and sweetened by a Fatherly Tenderness; and they should be received by us with the Duty of Subjects, with the Affection of Children: As Children we should behave our selves to him, as Children also
to

to his Ministers, because they are to us in his Stead : But still as Children, not as mean Vassals. The True Church of God is the Vice-gerent of God's Spiritual, Paternal Authority, which the Sectaries unjustly deny it ; but it is not the Vicegerent of God's Uncontroulable, Omnipotent, Temporal Power, which the Church of *Rome* as unjustly usurps.

This being premised, we may now the better go on to examine, wherein the true, sincere, Christian Simplicity consists, as to that Part of it which concerns the receiving of heavenly Truth.

If we consider the Original Example which we are here commanded to imitate, it seems that this blessed Temper is chiefly compos'd of Three excellent Virtues ; of all which, there is some weak Resemblance in little Children.

As the Minds of Children are generally clear, spotless, white, untainted, unprejudic'd ; as they are usually tender, gentle, pliable, capable of the best Impressions ; as Children commonly receive their Food, not with Nicety, or with Intent to quarrel at it, but willingly, and earnestly, for their Increase and Growth : So, in Conformity to that innocent Pattern, all the true Fol-

low.

lowers of Christ should endeavour to obtain,

First, a Plainness, and Purity of Understanding; such as is free from Artifices, free from Prejudices. .

Secondly, a submissive and guidable Spirit, a Disposition easie to all; especially tractable to those, that have either a Civil or Spiritual Authority over them.

Thirdly, an exact Care so to learn the Truths of Religion, that they may be employed for their true End, and best Advantage, which is Practice, and Growth in the Duties of a pious and Devout Life.

First, towards our right Instruction in the Doctrines of the Gospel, we should all labour to bring our Minds clear, unprejudic'd, clean, uncorrupt. For the being void of Errors, is the first great Step to the greatest Knowledge; and that Understanding, in which, tho' little is written, yet nothing is blotted; that which is not disfigured by ill Impressions, is a Subject most capable of the best. There nothing is required but plain Teaching; whereas the Mind that is either perverted by false Knowledge, or made crooked by deceitful Prejudices, must not only be taught, but first untaught

taught that Ill it had learned: And to unteach, is a much more difficult Work than to teach.

Such a pure, simple, undefil'd Disposition of Mind, by Nature we cannot pretend to, because of the Original Corruption of our Nature; but by the Grace of God in the Gospel we may attain it: And it is the chief Design of the Gospel to direct us in the Way to it.

That teaches us to cleanse, and repair, by Repentance, and Amendment, our natural Decays, and Pollutions; to be constantly watchful in keeping our Souls free from carnal, moral, nay spiritual Prejudices against Religion; to endeavour sincerely, that our Minds be not often overthrown by violent Passions, nor too much disordered by Worldly Affections; not seduc'd by Secular Ends, that secretly undermine the Soul; not corrupted by bodily Lusts, that openly war against the Soul; especially that they be not infected by false Enthusiastical Conceptions, concerning God, and Religion; which are wont most dangerously to insinuate themselves into the Soul, as seeming to come from Heaven, and coming under the Shadow of Religion it self.

The Second Part of this child-like Simplicity, is to be teachable, and that in a right Method, to be desirous of learning Precepts, as well as Truths; of Truths, to learn the plainest and most useful, before the deepest and most subtle; of Precepts, to apply our selves to those that concern our selves, more than others.

This teachable Humility is not only consistent with the greatest Spiritual Knowledge, but inseparable from it. 'Tis the Property of all true Knowledge, especially Spiritual, to enlarge the Soul by filling it; to enlarge it, without swelling it; to make it more capable, and more earnest to know, the more it knows.

Even in Natural Things, whoever pretends to have learn'd so much, that he has no Need, nor Will, to learn more, he has never learn'd any Thing aright. And if this be so in Natural Things, in which the Instruments, and Helps of our Knowledge are weak, and the Objects of it finite; how much more is it so in Divine Things? In which the Instruments, the Helps, the Objects, the Benefits of our Knowledge are infinite. In Divine Things to be always teachable, to be always Learning, is not only the most certain Way to Divine Wisdom,

dom, but even a good Degree of, Divine Wisdom it self.

The Third Part of such a true Simplicity of Understanding, is a sincere Desire, and unwearied Endeavour, to use and improve our Divine Knowledge in a right Manner, and to a right End. And what is the great, substantial saving Use, and End of all Spiritual Knowledge? Is it not to use it as Children do their Meat? To desire the *sincere milk* 1 Pet. 2. 2. *of the word, as new born babes, that we may grow thereby?* That we may grow thereby. And they who receive their Spiritual Food in such a manner, what they may want in a delicate Appetite, they have in a wholesome; if they come short of others in the Curiosity of their Taste, they as much exceed them in the Strength of their Digestion: Which in a Spiritual Life, as well as a Natural, is a greater Sign of a healthful Constitution: Whilst all other Knowledge in Religion only serves to make a Shew, and flashes away in Discourse; this endures, and is solidly beneficial for Sanctification here, for Salvation hereafter.

Such is that Simplicity of Understanding, which is necessary for the right Reception, increasing, and improving of
our

our Knowledge in the Truths of the Gospel. I am next to consider that Simplicity of Manners, which should always accompany the sincere Entertainment, and Practice of the Precepts of the Gospel.

This indeed has a very near Connexion with the former. The Head truly enlightned, will presently have a wonderful Influence in purifying the Heart; and the Heart really affected with Goodness, will much conduce to the directing of the Head. The Beginning of this blessed Work is most commonly in the Head, the Perfection in the Heart; but neither of them can be perfected without the other.

And what now is meant by the true, unfeigned, Christian Simplicity of Life, and Manners, and Conversation? We ought to be exceeding cautious, on what kind of Men we fix this Character; for we live in an Age, wherein, of all others, Hypocrisie has put on the best Counterfeited Vizors, the most Holy Disguises.

First then, as I did before in the Simplicity of Understanding, so I must now do in this Simplicity of Heart: I must try to vindicate, and separate it from the Mistakes, and Extremes of it.

And

And therefore I affirm, that it does not consist in any sullen Separation, or affected Purity, or demure Contempt, and Omission of the common Customs, and Usages, and Fashions of this World. For most certainly, with such common Things a Christian may comply, without Danger, with true Innocence, and Piety; and he may abstain from them, out of the greatest Spiritual Pride. Is not a Morosity and Singularity in such Things often made a Veil, and Cover of Licentiousness in greater Things? Have we not known it frequently us'd as an Opportunity of the greatest moral Dishonesty?

Must a Christian, by the Obligations of his Holy Profession, differ from, and abhor all the Customary Forms of Civil Life? How then could *St. Paul* become all Things to all Men? Would he have conform'd universally to all sorts of Men, if all manner of civil, or spiritual Conformity had utterly been unlawful?

Must I, with unmannerly Freedom, affront Authority, despise the publick Formalities of Government, live in a different Way, put on another Face, and Garb, than the rest of my Country-men, and alledge the Christian Simplicity to
justify

justify this my Rudeness? What then will become of the Christian Liberty, which in other Cases these Men so much magnifie? If this be Christian Simplicity, was not the Mosaical Severity a much lighter Yoke? Did not our Blessed Saviour himself abolish all such Judaical Reservedness and Separation, at the very first Founding of the Catholick Church? Which, it is probable, had never been Catholick so soon, if he had distinguished his Disciples from all the rest of Mankind, as the *Jews* were, in every little Circumstance, or Custom of Humane Life. For whilst the True Religion it self was straiten'd by the Jewish, severe Spirit; the Church of God was narrow in Compass, confin'd almost to one Country, despis'd by all the World besides. It was the honest Freedom, and universal Charity of the Christian Spirit, that first rent the Veil, and enlarged its Bounds, and spread its Authority to the utmost Ends of the Earth: So that next to the Almighty Power of God, one of the chief Occasions of the prodigious Swiftmess of the Churches first Progress, was, That the Primitive Christians asserted Just Liberties of Humane Nature, and set Men
C free

free from the Jewish unreasonable Sourness, and harsh Impositions.

Rom. 12.

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'Tis true, we are commanded *not to be conform'd to this World*: But in the very next Words, we have the true Interpretation of that Command. For it follows, *Be ye transform'd by the renewing of your Mind*. It is a new Mind, and the transforming of the Heart; not new Looks, or Habits, or Gestures, that Christianity requires. To the indifferent Things of this World we may be, to the decent Things of it we should be conformable; only to the Wick- edness, and Corruptions of it we should not. No Christian is forbidden the honest Skill, and Practice, and Prudence of this World; rather some are com- manded it, all are allow'd it, only none must be perverted by it, all must use it, for higher, and more Spiritual Ends.

So far is the True Religion from obli- ging all its Professors, either to with- draw wholly out of the World, or in Conscience to avoid all the usual Observances, and Manners, or even the innocent Delights of it, whilst they are in the World; that perhaps none are more capable, as of bringing more Be-
nefit

nefit to Mankind, fo of doing more Service to God, or exercifing more Evangelical Graces; than thofe Men, that are of the moft practical Lives, and engag'd in moft fecular Buſineſs. Greater will be their Victory over the World, if they ſhall converſe in it, without being defiled by it. If they ſhall labour to perform well all their Natural, Moral, Political, and Religious Duties in it, moſt inſtructive will be the Example of that Piety, moſt diffuſive that Charity, which is *ſet on a Hill* ſo eminent, and plac'd in ſo good a Light.

Were a Chriſtian to be the Diſciple of *John the Baptiſt*, he might then indeed think himſelf bound to follow the ſolitary, rigid Life of his Maſter in the Wilderneſs: But ſeeing he is to be a Chriſtian, he may be a Citizen of this World, as well as of the *New Jeruſalem*: He ought certainly to imitate a greater Example than of *John the Baptiſt*, that of our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf; who, though he too had his Time of Retirement in the Wilderneſs, yet liv'd not there; but was frequently in the Temple, convers'd generally in the City with all ſorts of People, went about every where doing Good.

Luke 11. 41. Give alms, says our Saviour, of such things as you have, and behold all things are clean to you. Let but a Christian perform the great substantial Duties of Christianity; and all other ordinary Things are clean, and lawful to him. *All Things*; of which some Things were denied to the Jews: *All Things*, that are not unclean in their own Nature: Those indeed can be lawful to none. The Righteousness, and Holiness of the Gospel, consists not in doubting much; but in living well: Not in a Zeal against little Things; but for great Things, in being *Zealous for good Works*. Undoubtedly there may be as much Superstition, in some Cases, on a Religious Account, to forbear doing what we lawfully may do; as it is to do what we should not. Superstition transgresses on both Extremes, and may offend as much in a too scrupulous forbearing, as in over-doing.

The true Christian Purity, and Simplicity of Life, that is here recommended, is therefore such, as is not bound to avoid all manner of Compliance with the external Fashions, and comely Ceremonies of Humane Life, and Conversation. 'Tis enough, if it uses Ceremonies, as Ceremonies; if it prefers the Sub-

Substance far before them ; if it chiefly regards the inward Reality. 'Tis such, as is not at all oppos'd to Decence, or Civility, or good Manners, or good Breeding ; but to Craft, unjust Artifice, Guile, and Diffimulation. 'Tis such, as, according to our Saviour's own Precept, must have *the Harmlesness of the Dove*, and yet may have the *Wisdom of the* Mat. 10. *Serpent*. That Wisdom, which single 16. in the Serpent is hurtful, and poisonous ; when it is temper'd with the Innocence of the Dove, is most commendable, most useful.

In a Word, 'tis such a Simplicity, as St. Paul the Christian put on, when he ceas'd to be Saul the Pharisee : Such as St. Paul himself describes, when he thus exhorts the *Corinthians : Brethren*, 1 Cor. says he, *be not children in understanding ;* 14. 20. *in malice be ye children, in understanding be ye men*. You see, to all true Christians a manly Understanding, is as much commanded, as a child-like Purity : So that in the most Evangelical Simplicity, the Prudence and Discretion of a wise Man may be, should be joyn'd with the native Innocence, and inoffensive Meekness of a little Child.

You now behold the Sum of those Duties, to which, by the Words of our Saviour in my Text, we are all oblig'd. They represent to us the Necessity of a Simplicity of Mind, in receiving the Laws of Christ, and of an honest Plainness of Heart, in living accordingly: Which indeed are the two principal Things, that, in all true Religion, are to be studied, and practis'd by all good Men.

Some Proportion, and Degree of both these Virtues, I say, is necessary to all Christians. I do not say, the highest and most compleat Degree of them to any: That is inconsistent with the Frailties of our mortal Condition, which God himself is pleas'd to consider, in the Gentleness of his Precepts. His Laws are perfect, as he is perfect; holy, as he is holy: But, seeing we cannot be equally so, by reason of humane Infirmary, God is pleased to accept of Integrity instead of Perfection, to prefer Simplicity before Hypocrisy, confess'd Ignorance before Presumption. What we really, and humbly endeavour, out of his abundant Grace, he will help us to perform, or accept of our Endeavours. As we must strive to be Children in Innocence, so in his infinite

finite Goodness, he looks on us to be but as Children in Weakness.

I am not ignorant, that this Doctrine of Christian Simplicity may sound strange in the Ears of those Men, who consult only the low, and mean Interests of this Life ; and therefore fancy themselves, in the proud imaginations of their own Hearts, to be the only wise, and subtle Men in this World. With such Men, Simplicity generally passes in the worst Sense, for Pusillanimity, Weakness, Folly, for a poor-spirited Christian Grace, that amongst the ancient Philosophers, they think, would scarce have escap'd the being reckon'd for a Vice.

But let none be too hasty in condemning the True Genuine Simplicity ; for I must tell them, it has always had an Extraordinary Pre-eminence and Dignity, not only in Religion, though chiefly there ; not only in the Sight of God, though that certainly were sufficient : But in all other Things, in the Judgment of all truly wise Men, in all the Works of Nature and Art, in all the best Practice of Civil Life.

If we observe the Order of the whole Creation, and the Ranks of all Things visible, are not the highest, and most

You now behold the Sum of those Duties, to which, by the Words of our Saviour in my Text, we are all oblig'd. They represent to us the Necessity of a Simplicity of Mind, in receiving the Laws of Christ, and of an honest Plainness of Heart, in living accordingly: Which indeed are the two principal Things, that, in all true Religion, are to be studied, and practis'd by all good Men.

Some Proportion, and Degree of both these Virtues, I say, is necessary to all Christians. I do not say, the highest and most compleat Degree of them to any: That is inconsistent with the Frailties of our mortal Condition, which God himself is pleas'd to consider, in the Gentleness of his Precepts. His Laws are perfect, as he is perfect; holy, as he is holy: But, seeing we cannot be equally so, by reason of humane Infirmary, God is pleased to accept of Integrity instead of Perfection, to prefer Simplicity before Hypocrisy, confess'd Ignorance before Presumption. What we really, and humbly endeavour, out of his abundant Grace, he will help us to perform, or accept of our Endeavours. As we must strive to be Children in Innocence, so in his infinite

finite Goodness, he looks on us to be but as Children in Weakness.

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If we observe the Order of the whole Creation, and the Ranks of all Things visible, are not the highest, and most

perfect Beings still most pure, most simple, and most of one Nature? Thus it is from the noblest Bodies to the Souls of Men, from the Souls of Men to Angels, from Angels to God himself: The higher any of these rise in their Excellence, they are still the more simple in their Essence.

If we examine all the Productions of Mens Hands, or Minds; is not the greatest Perfection of all Art, a most exact Imitation of True Nature? There is some Kind of easie solid Plainness, that far excels all the Comeliness of artificial Ornaments. There is some Kind of Simplicity that is attended with inexpressible Majesty. That, says

* St. Chry-
sostom on
St. Mat.
19. 14.
ἐτὶ γὰρ
φιλοσο-
φίας ὅρος,
μετὰ συ-
νέσεως
ἀπλάσων
τύπων
εἰς ἀγ-
γελικός.

* St. Chrysostom on those Words of St. Matthew, like to these in my Text, that is the great Design of all Philosophy, that is the very Life of Angels, to have the highest Understanding accompanied with unfeigned Simplicity.

If we reflect on the most polite Customs and Manners of humane Life, nothing is truly graceful, that is overmix'd, or unnaturally forc'd; no Word we speak, no Phrase we use, no Gesture, no Tone of Voice, that is overartificial, but it presently offends: No-
thing

thing in Beauty, in Habit, in Action, in Motion, can please, that is affectedly labour'd, and over-adorn'd: Nothing has so much Reverence in Humane Conversation, as True Ingenuity, Manly Plainness, Gentle Easiness, Undissembled Sincerity: Nothing sooner, or more, or longer, affects Men with Delight, and Love, and Admiration: Nothing is more honourable, nothing more amiable, nothing indeed more easie and safe. It is very probable, that more deep, dark, reserv'd, crafty Men, have at last fail'd of their Designs, even in this World, than the plain, upright, honest Men. The crafty Man has many Parts to play, many Minds to put on, many Faces to shift; so that it is almost impossible for him so to act all, as not to be discover'd in some, and then he will be suspected in all: Whereas the honest Man has but one Part to perform, which is his own, and that far more easie for him to do; because he always acts according to plain Nature.

Thus even in all worldly Things, as nothing is perfect without Decence; so nothing can be Decent without Simplicity. But above all Things, this is true in Religion, especially in the Christian

stian Religion. The Gospel, in the Great Duties, and Truths of it, is a plain and simple Thing; it is simple in its End, which is one, and always the same, Eternal Life: Simple in the Means that conduce to that End, which are but Two, and those always the same, Faith, and Obedience. And so simple should be the Practice of all, that would use those Means in a right Manner, and expect thereby the Benefit of that End.

Nothing shews a nearer Resemblance to the Divine Nature, than a Mind that is pure, unmix'd, and undefil'd: Nothing manifests a greater Conformity to the Divine Laws, than a Life of plain Innocence: Nothing more expresses that free, and generous Disdain, which all true Christians have, or should have of these Earthly, Transitory Things: Nothing declares a more magnanimous Confidence in the Divine Providence: Nothing a more submissive Resignation to the Divine Will: Nothing a more stedfast and assured Hope of future Happiness: Nothing can keep us safer from dangerous Mistakes in all Matters of Eternal Concernment.

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The plain, fair, even, candid Mind, of which a right Measure may soonest be taken, is best prepar'd to take a right Measure of spiritual Things. That mild and innocent Disposition, which least of all deceives others, is least of all capable of being dangerously deceived it self, in the Ways of Everlasting Salvation. Have not more bold, venturous, artificial Wits fallen into Errors, than they, who have been content with the steady, constant, firm, Motion of meek and humble Christians? Whilst those presume all on themselves, they trust to the most fallible Guide: Whilst these wholly suspect themselves, and implore most the Grace of God, they never fail of a certain Assistance, and Direction. And what has been generally the Success of both? The humble, teachable Temper of the one, has produc'd many real Saints: The proud, presumptuous, subtle Spirit of the other, has prov'd a fruitful Soil for the Production of Hereticks, or Atheists.

Give me Leave therefore most humbly to advise, and beseech you all, as you would be esteem'd the true Disciples of Christ, to labour for this blessed Temper, which is most proper
for

for Disciples, this humble and sincere Practice of what you do know, this humble Willingness to be taught what you do not know, and Submission to those that do.

I do not by this, in the least, plead for the gross Blindness, and implicit Faith of the Laity, which is one of the chief Artifices of the Church of *Rome*. No, we that are Ministers of the Church of *England*, may be content; nay, we may really wish, that all our Laity had as much true solid Understanding in Religion, as our Clergy. We can get no Advantage by your Want of Knowledge, no more than you can do by ours. We have no spiritual Cheat with which to delude you; for the representing of which we should stand in need either of Darkness, or of a false Light. We have nothing in our publick Profession, which the wisest Men, the most pious Christians, may not outwardly practice; nothing in our Faith, which they ought not inwardly to believe.

We know, and are well assur'd, that the only Reason, why our Church is not more generally embrac'd, and admir'd, is, because the Purity of its Doctrine, the Sobriety of its Devotion,

tion, the Moderation of it's Discipline, the Largeness of it's Charity, are not more impartially, and calmly examined, more generally understood. Our Church in its Spiritual State, as you are Christians, is most conformable to the Rules of Christ, to the Apostolical Practice, to the Primitive Institutions. In its Rational State, as you are Men, its Doctrines are very agreeable to the Reason of Mankind; its Precepts most becoming the purest, and the strictest Laws of Nature, and Virtue, and Morality. In its Political State, as ye are *Englishmen*, its Interest is inseparable from the Interest of our Nation, and Government.

We are therefore so far from being jealous of your most curious, and exact Search into the Practices, and Principles of our Church, that we desire it; nay, we most earnestly beseech it. We are in no Danger from Mens most subtle Inquiry into it; we may be from their utter Carelessness and Indifference towards it.

We are not against any Man's seeing Spiritual Truth; only we would not have the Blind presume to teach others to see: We would not have Men think
they

they see, when they do not ; which is the most certain Way for them never to see at all. We would have you know as much as you can ; only we would have you believe, that both you, and we, may know much more than we do : We intreat you to strive to know all, in a right Way, by sober Degrees, for right Purposes, and Uses, and Ends.

Most seasonably is this Advice ; and I wish it could be most effectually recommended. For, to speak plain Truth, a meek, humble, teachable Spirit, and by consequence, a devout, peaceable, and obedient Spirit, are almost quite gone out of the World : Whereas all Things in Religion should be plain, scarce any Thing will now please, that is so. Whilst so many strive to be Teachers, and place most of their Religion in that, How many Censurers have we of others ? How many Reformers of the Publick ? How few Learners ? How much fewer Practisers themselves ?

Alas ! Is it not apparent, that ever since so many of the Laity have so much invaded, so many have so much despised, the Office of the Clergy ; Pride

has

has evidently prevailed over Humility, Faction over Unity, ill Nature over Charity?

Though I am not willing to make a Satyr on any Religious Party; nor do I think that the best Way to reclaim them: Our Consciences should convince their Consciences, our Lives should confute their Lives: Else 'tis not enough only to employ our Tongues, and our Fancies, against their Consciences: Yet for Truth's sake, this I must say; that of all the Sects amongst us, who condemn the Authority of the Church, who separate themselves from the great Things of our Religion, on a Dislike of some small Things; and amongst whom all think themselves gifted Brethren alike: Whatever other Virtues, or Shadows of Virtues, they may seem to have; whatever Sobriety of Life, or Strictness of Conversation, or Freedom from some Scandalous Sins they may pretend to: For which yet I cannot but say, that if they are really such, as they pretend, I wish they were ours; yet may they not generally be observ'd to be exceedingly defective in the Two Principal, Fundamental Graces of Christianity? Which
are,

are, Humility, and Charity. Humility of Looks, or Habit they may have; but have they as much of Heart, or Life? Charity of Good Works, do they not too much despise, as a low, legal Way to Heaven? Charity of Opinions, have they any at all?

Mark 12.
17.

It cannot be denied, but in this last Age, in most of our Memories, our Nation has manifestly degenerated from the Practice of former Times, in many Moral Virtues, and Spiritual Graces, which should teach us to *render to God the Things that are Gods, and to Cæsar the Things that are Cæsars*. Where is that Integrity of Manners, that Truth of Conversation, that dutiful Observance of Order, that Modesty of Private Life, that Charity towards Men, that humble Devotion towards God, in which, we can only say we have heard, our Nation once excell'd?

'Twould be a Melancholy Employment to search into the Causes of this unhappy Change: But whatever other Occasions may have contributed to the Continuance and Increase of it; certainly the chief Cause of the Beginning of it was Spiritual Pride, and

and Hypocrisie; the Want, nay the contempt of an humble, and docible Spirit.

The different Effects of this Disposition, and of that which is contrary to it, have been abundantly tried in all Histories, in all States, Civil and Ecclesiastical; especially Ecclesiastical. Those Countries, and Societies of Men, have ever most flourish'd, where Men have been kept longest under a reasonable Discipline, those where the Number of Teachers have been few in Comparison to the Number of Learners. There was never yet any Wise Nation, or happy Church, at least never any that continued long so; where all have Thought themselves equally fit, and have been promiscuously admitted, to be Teachers, or Law-givers.

What can be the Consequence of such a head-strong, stiff-necked, overweening, unmanageable Spirit? Can any Thing be more destructive to Church, and State, than such a perverse Humour, as is unteachable, ungovernable it self, and yet over-hasty to govern, and teach others? Where Children get too soon out of the Government of their Parents, and Ma-

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sters:

sters: Where Men think it a Duty of Religion, to strive to get out of the Government of their Magistrate, and Prince: Where Christians shall think themselves not at all bound to be under the Government of the Church; must not all Domestick, and Politick, and Spiritual Relations soon be dissolv'd? Must not all Order be speedily overthrown, where all the true Ways to make, and keep Men orderly, are confounded?

And what in Time would be the Issue of such a Confusion? What? but either gross Ignorance, or false Knowledge? Which is as bad, or worse: What? but a Contempt of Virtue, and Prudence, under the disgraceful Titles of Pedantry, and Formality? What? but a Looseness of Tongues, and Lives? And at last, Mens taking Pride in, and valuing themselves on such Looseness? What? but a Disobedience to the Laws of Man, in a Pretence of the Kingdom of God; but, in Truth, a Neglect of all the Laws both of God and Man? In short, What? but mad Enthusiasm first, and then Licentious Atheism? For very near is the Distance, very easy the Passage, from one of these Extremes to the other.

Where

Wherefore for these most pernicious Distempers, the great Prevention, the best Remedy is this in my Text, *That we all receive the Kingdom of God as little Children*: That Children be carefully instructed in Religion, as Children, whilst they are so: That our grown Men, our wise Men, especially our witty Men, should not disdain to be as Children, in Respect of Spiritual Instruction: That the same Modesty of Opinions, and Duty to Governours, and Submission to Instructors, which Children have by Nature, without any Experience, they would strive to have by Choice, as the main End of, and best Means to improve their greatest Wit, and Experience.

'Tis good for a man that he beareth the yoke in his youth. Lam. 3. *'Tis good for him* 27. that beareth it, not only for Humane Society: *'Tis good to bear the yoke*; the severest Direction, the hardest Restraint; much more to yield to the Tenderness of Counsel, the Easiness of Instruction, the wholesome Severities of Discipline.

First then, in the Name of God, may the Means of Education, the Times of Institution, the Rules of Discipline,

the Laws of Government, the Distance and Duties of Inferiors to Superiors, of all Degrees, be most seriously regarded: That our Men may be brought up to Business, to Professions fitted for the World, for Heaven, by the laborious Methods of Virtue, and Knowledge, and Obedience, by an exact Rule, by sure Degrees: No matter how slow, so they be but sure, better too slow, than too precipitate.

And lastly, may our Men of ripe Years, our Men of Business, our Great Men, be intreated to revive, and restore the ancient Simplicity, and Integrity of Manners: To practise an inward Humility, and Lowliness of Mind; an outward Innocence towards all, Condescension to Inferiors, Observance of Superiors, Submission to Teachers, Subjection to Rulers: And to practise all these excellent Virtues, not only as so many Moral, or Political Duties, but, as indeed they are, as some of the most Christian, most Spiritual, and most Evangelical Graces.

Thus for us all to become as Children, is the surest Way to preserve where it is, to recover where it was lost, private Virtue, publick Honesty, and a National Piety.

And

And by the Words of our Saviour in my Text, I am impower'd to promise to this blessed Temper, an Eternal Reward. For if *whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter therein*: Hence we may well conclude, that whosoever shall receive it as a Child, shall enter therein. For of such, says our Saviour, *is the kingdom of God*. Of which, I beseech Almighty God to make us all Partakers. Amen.

Old Nov 8 1812
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FINIS.

And by the Words of our Saviour
in my Text, I am answered to dis-
cuss to this blessed Tenor, as first
and Reward, for it is written that we
receive the Kingdom of God as a little
child, that we enter therein: Hence we
may well conclude that whoever
shall receive it as a Child, shall enter
therein. For we have our Saviour
in the Kingdom of God, of which
blessed Almighty make us all

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F I W I S

A
SERMON

Preached before the
HONOURABLE
House of Commons,

A T
St. Margaret's, Westminster,
January 30. 167⁷/₈.

By *THOMAS SPRAT*, D.D.
Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

L O N D O N,
Printed for *Charles Brome*, 1710.

SERMON

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SERMON

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House of Commons,

At S. Margaret's, Westminster,

January 30. 1678.

St. MAT. V. Ver. 10.

*Blessed are they which are persecuted
for Righteousness sake: For theirs
is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

WE are here assembled to lament the Death of one of the best Kings that ever lived, and the most Pious Martyrs that ever suffered. We are this Day to bewail a Crime so detested by God, and Man, that, unless this Day had been

been long since publicly appointed, by the Voice of the whole Nation, pronounced by you the Representatives of it, for us and our Posterity, to bewail it Yearly, in this, and all future Ages; the guilty Memory of this Day had for ever remained an indelible Disgrace to the present Age, and to the whole *English* Name it self.

When we shall recollect the Afflictions, and the Virtues of that Blessed King; and shall remember, that in his Virtues he excelled the most happy Princes; in his Afflictions he equalled the most unfortunate Men: Though it should not incline us to murmur at the Divine Providence, whose Judgments are above our Knowledge, and therefore ought not to come under our Censure: Yet certainly, it cannot but make us abhor the terrible Effects of furious Zeal, when it mistakes Providence: It cannot but raise in us the greatest Hatred of Faction on a Pretence of Liberty; and of Ambition, when it counterfeits Religion.

Should it not fill us all with Grief and Amazement, that such a King could suffer as a Tyrant! Who was, to His People, the most constant Defender of their ancient Privileges, the greatest

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Author of New ones ? Or as an Enemy to the True Religion ! Who was in his Life the great Ornament ; in his Death the most devout Example of it ? Or as unworthy to govern ! Who, not only by his Birth, had a Successive Right to the Crown, which he could not forfeit ; but also, by his Personal Virtues, might have deserved another Title to it, if his Crown had been Elective, and, as His Murderers impudently pretended, at the Disposal of his Subjects.

Whether we consider Him on the Throne, as he was there, too short a Space, the Vice-gerent of God's Power ; or in the Church, as he always imitated, and resembled the Divine Purity : Or should we measure Him, as we would any other Man : Should we take His Picture, as He Himself delighted to be drawn, with His Crown and Scepter laid aside, and His Wife, and Children, or Servants by Him : Whether we observe His Royal and Christian, or His Private and Moral, Excellencies ; we might find in all, some Extraordinary Character of Greatness, and of that, which is the only true Greatness, such as was admirably temper'd, and adorn'd with Goodness.

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But those other more resplendent Parts of his Life, are a Subject fitter for a History than a Sermon. And, no doubt, if there shall be any Virtue, and Praise of Virtue, in the Generations to come after us; His Name will live, and be mentioned with Reverence in the Records of Honour: Though not in the large Roll of those Kings, who have been only Happy, Prosperous, and Victorious in this World; yet amongst the far smaller Number, but much more Sacred, more truly Glorious Number of those Kings that have been Saints, and Confessors, or Martyrs; and therefore *more than Conquerors*.

I confess, I might, and, give me Leave to say it, I intended to have complain'd, that the present Age had not made that Use of Him which it ought: His Enemies, for their Repentance, and Amendment; nor even His Friends, for His Praise and Honour. But, blessed be God, I am happily prevented in one Part of the Complaint: I have nothing now to wish, but that His Enemies would as well perform their Duty to Him, as it must be acknowledged, you his Friends have done yours; by that much desired, long expected, Yesterday's Vote; in which you have given a Resurrection to His Memory, by

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designing Magnificent Rites to his Sacred Ashes. So that now, for the future, an *English* Man Abroad will be able to mention the Name of King *CHARLES the First*, without blushing: And his Heroick Worth will be delivered down to Posterity, as it always deserved to be, not only freed from Calumny, or Obscurity, but in all Things most illustrious, in all Things to be commended, in most Things to be imitated, in some Things scarce imitable, and only to be admired.

In Confidence of this, I will leave the rest of His just Panegyrick to the Registers of Civil History: And I will only now employ that short Time your Favour shall allow me, in representing to you that one particular Grace; which, I believe, he had in as high a Degree as our Mortal Condition, of it self, is capable to receive, his Magnanimity in Suffering: And it will best become this Religious Place and Office, to recommend to you, from amongst his many other Virtues, that one Virtue of his Divine Patience, which he could learn from no other Principle but his Religion.

To this Purpose, I have chosen to speak on these Words of our Blessed Saviour; wherein

wherein he perposes Persecution, which to Nature seems the greatest Evil, to be the greatest Good : Such as all his Disciples ought, not only to endure well, as a necessary Burthen, but to enjoy as a Blessing.

The Words themselves consist of Three Parts :

First, This New and Strange Christian Paradox : That, *to be persecuted is a Blessing*.

Secondly, The only Qualification that can make it to be so : It must be a Persecution *for Righteousness Sake*.

Thirdly, The great Reason why it is a Blessing : Because it is attended with the greatest Reward, *the Kingdom of Heaven*.

I cannot now stay to insist distinctly on these Particulars, or to handle the Argument in my Text as a common Place of Divinity. It will neither agree with the present Temper of your Minds, or my own, to treat of it in such cold and general Terms. But what I shall say on this Great and Primitive Doctrine of Christianity, shall be only so much as you may apply to the present Occasion : That when I

come

come to recount the King's unparallel'd Sufferings, you His Friends may be something comforted in beholding the Solid, and Eternal Foundation of his Suffering so well; which was no other than the Faith into which we were all Baptiz'd: And that therefore the *Christian Faith*, the Faith of the Church of *England*, may have the Credit of that Greatness of Mind, it taught the King in his Extremity.

That *to be persecuted is a Blessing*, was a Doctrine never heard of, till our Saviour here first introduc'd it. No other Teacher, or Law-giver, ever went, or durst go so contrary to the Interests and Pleasures of Flesh and Blood. None else would have laid so much Weight on Humane Nature: Or could have made it so easie: None but He, that was God, as well as Man: He that, as Man, knew what it was to suffer: And, as God, knew how to support those that suffered.

'Tis true, the Power of bearing Persecution well, has been always pretended to, by all Sects, and Nations, and Religions of Men. All History is full of such great Examples, amongst those to whom the Gospel was never revealed.

But

But have not the rest too generally gone on the wrong, or tottering Principles, of empty Fame, of doubtful Philosophy, of false, or imperfect Religions? Certainly seldom any truly great, seldom any steady, and unchangeable Comfort, little lasting Relief, most certainly scarce any Everlasting was to be found, till the Appearance of our Saviour, to make Men, on just Grounds, to rejoyce, and triumph in Pains, and Losses, and Miseries.

Mankind, before that, was left defective in this most necessary Virtue, of which we have all a perpetual Use. For, my Brethren, there is no Retirement so secure, no Provision so large, no Search so happy, as to find out that Place, whither no Cares, nor Misfortunes, make their Way. The Sweetest, the Fairest, the most Plentiful, Alas! you see, the most Commanding Condition is oftentimes a Greater Burden; at best, is only a Less, and a Gentler Misery, not any Real Happiness. Of all those that built Houses in the Parable, the most raised them on the Sand: The best, and the wisest, could only found them on the Rock: On which, notwithstanding all their Prudence, the Winds did blow, and

and the Sea did rage about them: All their Advantage, was not a full Quiet; but only that the Storms did beat on them in vain.

And this is that for which we are only beholden to our Saviour *Christ*; of whom we may justly say, in Respect of Mankind, as *Augustus* said of himself, and Rome, *Lateritiam invenit, Marmoream reliquit*; he found our Nature weak and frail, composed of *Adam's* mouldring Earth; but he made it, and left it of the finest, and most durable Marble. He himself came persecuted; but one of the chief Ends of his Coming, was to free all that believe on him, and obey his Commands; though not from all Persecution, yet from all the Curse of it, nay to do better than if he had taken all Persecution quite away, to make it a Cause of Joy and Felicity, a Blessing to those that are persecuted.

And, How feeble! How deceitful! How much like a broken Reed, which only pierces where it should uphold, are all the other Motives, and Principles of Suffering well, in comparison to those that He has taught!

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First,

First, Some Men indeed may strive to endure Afflictions courageously, in a Sense of natural Decence; by Force of some natural Passion, or by the single Precepts of natural Wisdom. But what is the chief End that such Men can propose to themselves? Can it be much more than the bare Expectation of transitory Fame and Honour in this World? Or some temporary Interest and Contentment here below? And what mighty Reliefs or Rewards are these? Such Consolations, at best, can only stupify the Mind under Pain; they are far from turning the Pain into a Blessing. Such Recompences are imaginary, contemptible, perishing, whilst the Labours Men take for them are great and real: Whereas to a Christian Sufferer, the Labours are contemptible, compared to the inestimable Greatness of the Recompence.

Undoubtedly, nothing in this Life can make Afflictions tolerable, much less a Blessing, but a Belief that there is another Life; in Comparison to the Joys of which, the Miseries of this Life are of no Consideration: Nay, a Belief, that we shall partake of the Joys of another Life, if we bear patiently the ordinary and extraordinary Miseries of this; and that nothing can teach us to do the right
Way,

Way, but Religion, nothing but the right Religion.

For, *Secondly*, there is also a strange Force and Resolution of Mind that may proceed from false Religions, and from the Principles of Enthusiasm. This Kind must be confess'd far to exceed all natural Courage in its Effects: It may sometimes be hardly distinguishable from the true Patience that is taught by the true Religion it self.

Yet there are very material Distinctions between them; the Chief, this in my Text: The one is only for the true Righteousness Sake; the other for a Counterfeit Hypocritical Righteousness. And besides, they differ, in that the true Religion, rightly used, teaches Men really to believe, that to be persecuted is a Blessing, but never to persecute. False Religion and Enthusiasm may make Men pretend to believe, that to be persecuted is a Blessing, but really to believe that the Power of Persecution is a greater Blessing, and to use that Power with the greatest Cruelty when they have got it; as we have felt by many dismal Instances, especially that of that black and guilty Day.

However, it is too true, that mistaken Zeal, and deluding Inspirations, have oftentimes a prodigious Influence on those Minds that are possessed with them; possessed in the worst Sense of the Word: They can easily make Men despise all Dangers and Terrors: They can fill their Profelites with Heat and Raptures enough to rush violently on Torments, to glory in the false Presumption of Martyrdom, to do as *Empedocles* of old, who cast himself willingly into the fiercest Flames, that he might be thought to go to Heaven. We have seen a blind Fanatical Zeal enrage Forty Men to make War against a mighty Nation in full Peace, in the midst of its principal City.

And since the Implacable Enemies of our Church and State have had, and still have, such a dreadful offensive Weapon in their Keeping, as all zealous, though erroneous Religion is: Should not this, my Brethren, be a serious Admonition to us, who profess our selves Friends to the Church and State, to make Provision against them, by the better, more powerful, indeed, invincible defensive Weapons of our Spiritual Warfare, that may be learnt from the true and unfeigned Religion? Since they pretend to fetch their Armour from Heaven against
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our Cause, ought not we really to fetch ours from Heaven against theirs? We cannot want all other Means of Defence; we have Reason, and Justice, and Law, and Loyalty, on our Side: All those, the Enemies of our Church and State, must want. But let us beware, lest if they have any Zeal, we none, they have something more forcible than any of the other. Most certainly, nothing but Conscience well-informed can be an equal Match for Conscience misguided: Nothing but the Power of Godliness, nothing but true Zeal, can break the Force of false Zeal, and of the very Form of Godliness.

Wherefore, from that fatal Example, How much the Name of Godliness, hypocritically used, stood our Adversaries in stead! May we be instructed to govern our Minds, and strengthen our Hearts, and reform our Lives, by the Directions and Precepts of the true Holiness; to have our Consciences as much in earnest as theirs, but better informed; not only to hate the Hypocrisy, but to out-do the Warmth of their Zeal. And if the very Shadow of *Christ* could do such wonderful Things, What would not his Hand, his Tongue, his Body, his Life do? If by a sad Experience, we have found a

feigned and dissembled Piety, so outrageously strong, and too long irresistible; Should we not thence conclude, what greater Influence, what more durable Authority, the true Piety might have on our Minds, by the Efficacy of its own true Promises, Rewards, and Comforts? In which, God has pitied the Infirmities of our weak Humanity; has supplied them all in a gracious Proportion to our Defects; has provided the greatest Happiness for our immortal and mortal Parts hereafter; has furnished us with the best Relief for our mortal Part here.

But, that Religion should bestow the surest Aid and Assistance in Persecution is the more strange; because, at the first View, it seems to make Persecution more grievous, by forbidding us many Helps and Means of Defence, which Nature offers to the Afflicted. Does not our Saviour's Doctrine command us to have the severest Thoughts of our selves? It tames the Mind, as well as it requires the Body to be subservient to the Mortification of the Mind: It lays so much Restraint on our intemperate Pleasures that to a carnal Man it even seems to render Prosperity a Sort of Persecution. It denies us the Use of some Kinds of Resistance; of all Manner of Revenge

of all actual Revenge, which is the Delight of the Powerful ; of all revengeful Thought, which may be esteemed some Ease to the Weak.

How then can it be, that such a Doctrine should turn all Persecution into a Blessing? Yes, most certainly : And for the most weighty Reasons ; of which, the Two Principal are here mentioned. In this Life, it makes the Suffering delightful, because *it is for Righteousness Sake* : In the next, it makes it our Glory and Crown, because of its just Claim to the *Kingdom of Heaven*.

First, I say, it is this Doctrine only that prescribes such Rules, and provides such Helps, for the right ordering of all our Thoughts, Words and Actions, in this Life ; that if they be exactly followed, will put us into a Condition of *suffering for nothing but Righteousness Sake*. So much Moderation it imposes on our Enjoyment of Things in our Power ; so much it teaches an inoffensive Meekness, and Caution of not displeasing God, or injuring Man ; that whoever lives accordingly, whatever his Persecution may be, he cannot but be innocent in it ; and if he be innocent, the

Persecution will be so too, and will do him no manner of Hurt.

To a Heart so conscientiously prepared, so certain of its Duty, so rightly secured in its Cause, the Afflictions of this World have quite another Appearance than to the rest of the World. They are presently found to be only the tender Trials of a merciful Father; to be not only his Trials, but Tokens and Testimonies of his Love, and of our Adoption; to entitle us to the Privileges of God's own People and Children, to his peculiar Care, to his spiritual Joys, to his Kingdom.

That is the other Contemplation which compleats this Blessing: And it is only the Hope of ~~the~~ Kingdom, which our Lord *Christ alone has purchased for us*, that can be equal to the Wants and Wishes of our Immortal Souls: That only can refresh the Distressed, and ease the Heavy-laden, and support the Living, and rejoyce the Dying; without that Expectation, the least mortal Frailties and Crosses, even Mortality it self, were an intolerable Oppression: But with it, the cruelest mortal Pains may be made light, and inconsiderable: Without that Belief, as Christians of all Men, so Men of all Creatures, were most miserable.

If

If there were no Prospect of Heaven, even Earth it self were a Kind of Hell : So dark, so uncomfortable, so dismally doubtful, were the Condition of Mankind. But now there is a Heaven, so certain, so unquestionable, so near them who believe it, and labour for it : To such, there shall not only be no Hell ; but even Earth it self, amidst all their Earthly Calamities, becomes a Kind of Heaven : So truly Great is their present Comfort ; so unspeakably Great will be their future Felicity.

You now behold the Character, Supports, and Benefits, of that Persecution, which, in the Religion that all of us have embraced, is reckoned as a Blessing. This infallibly is the Christian Doctrine. I come next to inforce and illustrate it by a Christian Example. And I might alledge that of the Blessed Author of it, our Saviour himself : But, in him it may be said, the Godhead did sustain the Humanity. I might urge the Apostles, and Primitive Disciples : But they also were immediately assisted by a miraculous Power, enabling them to do, and to suffer. I might produce a Noble Army of Martyrs, in all Ages of the Christian Church : But it will now be enough, once for all, only to mention

tion the Blessed Pattern of that Saint-like King ; whose wonderful Patience, in an Age wherein Miracles were ceased, did almost seem to revive them : His magnanimous Suffering did evidence, how much Strength and Lustre the true Piety may add to the most Princely Mind : The Afflictions that surrounded his Head did not deface, but beautify his Life. As the Thorns his Great Master wore at his Passion, they were intended by his Enemies for his Shame, and his Pain ; but they were, in Truth, his Crown, his Fourth, more precious Crown.

When I seriously reflect on all the Sufferings of that Excellent Prince ; how little he deserved the least of them from any Man ; how much far otherwise he merited from many the chief Authors of them ; and yet by how many sad Circumstances they were still encreased ; against how many fair Hopes they still prevailed ; and with what unshaken Constancy he bore them all : I cannot but conclude, that he was separated, and consecrated, as it were, by God's special Appointment, to fall a Glorious Sacrifice ; to give a new Example of Christian, Passive Courage, to the decaying Virtue of this Age : And that, as the Blood of Martyrs is truly said to be the

Seed

man's son

Seed of the Church ; so the Blood of one Martyr'd King, should be the perpetual Seed both of the Church and Monarchy of *England*.

He succeeded to his Temporal Crowns, by the Conjunction and Indisputable Right of many Royal Lines. Yet he was so far from having the usual Allowance that seems due to Rightful, Sovereign Princes ; from observing whose very Faults too curiously, their Subjects ought, and in better Times their honourable Enemies were wont, to retire with Respect : So far he was from being thus used, that even his Virtues were misinterpreted, and scandalously reviled. His Gentleness was miscalled Defect of Wisdom ; his Firmness, Obstinacy ; his regular Devotion, Popery ; his decent Worship, Superstition ; his Opposing of Schism, Hatred of the Power of Godliness. Such was the remarkable Aggravation of his unjust Persecutions, that though he had manifestly the Right on his Side, yet his Enemies, by their Artifices, had got over most of the good and plausible Words to be on theirs. Whilst the worst of their Actions were sanctified and made popular by the specious Titles of *Liberty*, *Purity*, and *Reformation* ; he died for the Laws, as a Male-

Malefactor ; for the Church, the best Reformed Church, as an Enemy to the Cause of God.

To his People he was ever most indulgent, still scattering amongst them the Royal Prerogatives, with a Liberality rather becoming the Mildness of the Giver, than due to the Ingratitude of the Receivers : For, in answer to all his most bountiful Concessions, he still met with evil Surmises, perverse Comments on all his Acts of Grace ; and those seconded by mutinous Petitions, seditious Clamours and Assaults, and at last an open Rebellion. What shall we say ? Some strange Fatality, some unusual, unheard-of Giddiness, had unawares seized on, and, in too great a Part, infatuated the *English* Spirit ; to make them grow discontented, and sick of their very Prosperity ; thus rashly to employ the Riches and Plenty they reaped from the first happy Part of his Reign, to render the latter Part of it unhappy.

Nor were the Calamities of his Fate only confined to himself, which, no Doubt, a Mind of so much innocent Tenderness desired ; but they were infectious to all about him. That which, in any other Age, would have been thought

thought a Proof of the greatest humane Abilities, to counsel wisely and faithfully so judicious a Prince ; and a Sign of the greatest humane Felicity, to be beloved by so great and good a Prince ; was then a certain Fore-runner of Misfortune.

Of his dearest Servants, the First, whom he received from his Father, and himself long protected from the blind Malice of Envy, was snatch'd from him by the Hand of a base Assassinate : And whilst his generous Heart was bleeding for the Loss, many Thousands of his Subjects, with secret Shews of Satisfaction, nay with open Testimonies of Joy, applauded the horrid Murther of his Friend.

His other best Servant, a Minister, the most able of that Time, both for Council and Action ; a Friend, one of the best which ever the Church of God had, since it needed such a Friend : Him he was constrained to give up as a Prey to Popular Tumults, or, which is as bad, to Popular Justice ; nay, which was worse, and which ought not to have been mentioned, but that the King himself often spoke, and writ of it, with such solemn Remorse ; his Royal and
Guilt-

Guiltless Hand was made an unwilling Instrument of that unrighteous Action.

But the Justice this Parliament has done to the Earl of *Strafford's* Honour, has vindicated the Name of Parliaments in this Particular ; and the Repentance of that merciful King, has paid an honourable Attonement to his Ghost. The Servant's Innocence has been abundantly justified by the Master's so passionately accusing his own Weakness, for yielding to his Death. It was indeed a Weakness, to which the Counsels of his disguised Enemies, or timorous Friends, provoked him: Yet, he could never at last have been drawn to it, had he not been half perswaded, that it was better for one Man to die, than for the whole People to perish. And how justly may we think his Virtues to have been extraordinary! when his greatest Fault (I make bold to call it his Fault, and I believe it was his greatest) had so good and innocent a Foundation, as the Peace of Three Kingdoms! Have we not great Reason to suppose, that his Conscience was most strictly watch'd and guarded from Sin? Could any of his Enemies, notwithstanding all their Boasts in this Kind, shew us a Proof of a Conscience so tender? Which did so affectionately lament,

lament, so severely repent of that Offence, as if the whole Guilt of it had been his own : Whereas, at the Worst, the Infirmary of it only was his ; the Guilt belongeth to his Enemies.

His own Family was at once persecuted in many Quarters of the World. There was scarce a great House in all *Christendom*, that had contracted Alliance with him, which God's Visitation did not seem to search out, and to reach, in that Age. An Observation, in which his Adversaries were wont much to glory ; as if he, and his whole Name, had been utterly rejected by Heaven. But Success and Prosperity in this World, is rather a *Turkish* than a *Christian* Proof of God's Favour ; and the Adversity the like of his Displeasure : Or else, we might often since have confuted the very same Men with their own Argument.

His only Sister had a long Familiarity with Unhappiness. Her, he could never relieve in his most prosperous Days. Nor was Providence roused to restore her Family, till about the Year of his Martyrdom.

His own Queen was exposed to all Manner of Injuries : Robb'd of the Privileges due to her Sex, much more to her high Birth and Condition : Declared

red Traitor for doing the Duty of a Wife: The Laws of humane Society violated, to keep his very Mind from her: His Letters to her intercepted, published, condemned, as Correspondents with the Disaffected.

His Children were driven from his Paternal Care, in that Age which most needed it: Some bred up at home under the Discipline of his Enemies; of whom, even the tender Mercies were cruel: Others wandering abroad, and depending on the uncertain Pity of his Neighbours. What one of the Ancients said of *Pompey's Fall*, was too true of the King's: One Country could not contain so great a Ruin: The Shipwreck was cast on many Shores: Not indeed to be buried there, as *Pompey* was; but to return again by a wonderful Restitution. Yet that Satisfaction the King himself liv'd not to see: He only felt the severe Side, their Separation, and Distresses: The comfortable Part, their Restauration, his Blessed Spirit has enjoyed in Heaven since his Death: And, by a strange, mysterious Effect of the Divine Mercy, his very Death ought to be esteemed the principal Cause of their Restauration.

Thus

Thus was he unjustly persecuted in one Part of his Domestick Relations. There was another also, in whose Ruin he was even yet more nearly concerned, and that was the *Church of England*. For, Why may I not call our Church, a Member of his private Family; seeing he cherisheth it so familiarly, convers'd with it so constantly, provided for it so carefully? It were well if this were all; but I must add, he died for it so zealously.

For the Service and Devotions of this Church, his Affections were so inflamed, his Judgment so confirmed, his Practice in them so incessant, that in all these he was scarce to be equalled by any of his own Ministers; I am persuaded, he was outdone by none. We have undeniable Instances, that neither his best beloved Recreations, nor one of the most sorrowful Messages he ever received, not his most urgent Business, not his greatest Delights, not his greatest Grief, could prevail with him ever to omit, or but for a Moment to interrupt, his daily solemn Prayers.

From this Church he might have expected, and he had his last Comforts: But, alas! when he most needed her Help, he saw her in the greatest outward

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Desolation her self : Her chief Prelate, one of the most innocent, devout, and magnificent Men of that Age, beheaded in the View of Forty Thousand Men ! and too many of them so inhumane, as to rejoice at the Death of a Bishop ; against whom, their chief Objection was, his being a Bishop.

Of this Church, whose Preservation and Prosperity had been always his chief Study, he lived to see the Truth questioned, the Glory vanished, the Buildings falling, the Revenues devoured, and so devoured, that he himself must be compelled either to confirm the Sacrilege by his Authority, or to make Way for it by his Blood. Of which Two dreadful Extremes, he chose the last ; and so became our Churches Martyr, as he had been her Saint : A Saint, incomparably more holy than all the *Enthusiastical* Saints of the Sectaries ; a Martyr, to be preferr'd before a whole Multitude of Martyrs that swell the *Romish* Calendar.

Of this Church, in his Imprisonments, the Publick Offices were sometimes denied him ; the Attendance of his own Chaplains sometimes forbid ; seldom but precariously allowed : Liberty of Conscience refused the King
by

by the meanest of his Subjects, who claimed it as their own Due, both by Religion and Nature, and made that the chief Pretence of their Rebellion against him.

His most secret Duties of Piety were often disturb'd by the Abuse and Outrage of the common Soldiers: Hardly the Service of one of his Bishops was afforded him in his last Agony. Yet Providence so ordered it, that it was the very Bishop, whom of all his Clergy he had most employed in Secular Affairs. Nor could any Thing more justify the pious and conscientious Choice of his Ministers, both of Church and State, than that the very same Man who had managed his Revenue, should be thought fittest to direct his Conscience; that his best Treasurer should be his last Confessor.

As to the unnatural War against him, he made himself so naked to avoid it, that, when it was forced on him, he was not in a Capacity to maintain his own just Rights in it. He went so far to meet his undutiful Subjects in a peaceful Compliance, that he divested himself of most of his own Strengths, by which he might have suppress'd them. Why then did his Enemies so often tell Hea-

ven in their Prayers, *That it was not the Arm of Flesh which brought them Salvation*; when they had in their usurped Possession the most considerable Forces, and Estates of their own Complices, or, *his Friends, his Fleets, his Magazines, his Revenue*, and the far stronger Part of all the Carnal Means of the Nation on their Side? Why did they so often boast, in their Way of *Vain-glorious Humiliations*, *That they themselves were only dry Bones*; *that a Divine Spirit animated them*; and *that God was their Confederate*? When it was so far from being a signal Providence, that the King was at last overcome; that indeed it was rather a Wonder he was not sooner! That *You, and such as You, and Your Fathers*, could so long support *his declining Cause*, against a Power so much more mighty than *his, and yours*!

But God thought fit to suffer him to be defeated. And though *the Divine Councils were in this*, as they are in many other Things, *unsearchable*; yet thus much we may safely pronounce, *That it was not in Wrath to him, but in Mercy*. It was indeed our Wound, and our Calamity, not his: For his Sufferings that followed his Defeat, redounded far more to his own Glory, than if he had *Triumphed in War*, or if *his Life had smoothly*

ly slid away in Peace. His *Reign*, if it had continued quiet, must needs have been most happy. That Goodness of Temper, had it not been opposed, would sure have been admirable, seeing it was so great when most bitterly offended. His *Victory*, if he had conquered, would, no doubt, have been Mild, and Bloodless : None would have perished by it, but Arm'd, and in the Field. He had too great a Heart to insult over the Miserable. He would certainly have laid no other Chains on the Vanquished, but those of Pardon and Mercy ; seeing he forgave them, and pitied them, amidst the Pride and Rudeness of their own Victory.

This is a Truth undoubted : Yet still I must affirm, that it was more for his own Personal Renown he was overcome. Many others would have shared with him in the Honour of the Conquest : His Armies, his Commanders, and Fortune it self, might have claimed some Part in those Laurels. But this was a Praise far greater, much rarer, more Christian, wholly God's, and his own ; that after his Soldiers routed, his Garrisons yielded, his Friends reduced to the last Extremity but Despair : And who but such Friends would not then have



despaired? Yet still he kept his own Mind unconquered, and made that naked, and alone, to encounter and triumph over all the Malice of his Enemies.

We are now arrived at that which, in the World's Opinion, was the most unfortunate; but, in a Christian Account, was the most victorious Part of the King's Life. There is still behind, a lamentable Story; to us lamentable, tho' not to him: But after so many *sad Representations*, it is Time the Veil be drawn. The *deplorable Remainder* is only fit for *such Savages to hear*, who could see it *without Grief*, and *cause it without Remorse*. Here therefore let us pass it by in Silence: Let us strive to overwhelm the Cruel and Guilty Part of the *King's Martyrdom*, which was *his Enemies Part*, by the Contemplation of the innocent and honourable Part of it, that *was his own*.

And this, my Brethren, is such a Way of keeping the *Thirtieth of January*, as the *Royal Martyr himself* most desired. This Way of observing it, is most answerable to the first Design, of dedicating such Days to the Memories of departed Saints. For when the Primitive Christians first met on such *Solemn Occasions*,

asions, on the very Days, and oftentimes on the very Places where some Eminent Christian had Suffered, they were not wont to spend their Time in cursing their Enemies, or repeating the wretched Circumstances of their Cruelty; but rather in praying, that God would convert them; in declaring the Pious Works and Admirable Patience of those that had suffered, and in giving God the Glory of their Exemplary Sufferings.

You have therefore heard enough, how this Blessed Martyr was unjustly persecuted; though I have stopt my Narration on the very Brink of the Precipice. Let us now see how he made those Persecutions a Blessing; how he behaved himself in those his last and severest Conflicts; when the whole World was a Spectator, too calmly a Spectator, of the last Part of his Life: Whilst wicked Men furiously pursued his Death; furiously, for it was one Time or other to be the Cause of their own Destruction; whilst good Men prayed for him, but could not otherwise help him; nay, his Enemies prayed too, and boldly belied Heaven, in presuming that his Murther was the Return of their Prayers. But Heaven was on his Side; God supported him, the Angels mini-

stred to him, the Devils tempted him in vain, his Adversaries too effectually.

And I beseech you, where can there be found a worthier or more plentiful Subject for our Admiration, than that so great a King, who had swayed those Scepters that are the Ballance of all *Europe*, should come down from his high Estate, by so many easy and deliberate Degrees! Should put off all the Ornaments of a just Sovereignty, to bear all the Indignities of his own Subjects Tyranny, with so little Reluctancy, with so much Contentment! Should prepare himself still for thicker and greater Afflictions, by a Glorious Disdain, and yet a Pious Improvement of all the former! Should have so kind so compassionate of others Misfortunes, even of his Enemies Offences, and yet so serene amidst his own Dangers! Should have a greater Lustre and Majesty of Countenance, as *Moses* had; and that not when he was performing an Act of Government, and administering the Law, but when he was dying, by the unjust Pretence of his having broken his own Laws!

For any Man to bear Miseries well, has been ever counted so great an Honour, that some of the ancient Heathens have too extravagantly thought

it equalled Men to God himself, who is not capable of Misery. That (says one of them) is truly Divine, to have the Frailties of a Man, the Security of a God. It is indeed, by all true Philosophy, esteemed to proceed from the greatest Strength of Nature; by all true Christianity, from the highest Degree of Grace.

Can any other Virtue so clearly manifest, of what strong, and firm, and invulnerable a Temper the Heart is made? Passive Courage is performed within, in the Soul it self; when Men are forlorn, oppressed, despised, not so well as only forsaken; when they have no Flatterers, few Comforters, scarce any but Enemies near them.

And therefore this Grace before was generally more found in the poor, low, and obscure Part of the World: It was commonly excluded from Princes Courts, by a Thousand Delights, and by the pompous Dreams of humane Greatness. 'Twas almost enough Patience before in great Men, to be only more moderate and reserved in their Pleasures.

From the greatest and best of Kings before, Men used rather to take Examples how to lead Armies, to command Nations, to distribute Justice, to cherish
their

their good Subjects, to subdue the Rebellious. These were the Arts of Empire: It was from the severe Practices of the Cottage, the Cell, and the Gown, that they usually fetch'd Instructions, and Examples, how to submit to hard Fate; to endure mildly the Rigours of a strong Power; to condemn the Melancholy, and Terrours of a Prison; to pardon, or to bear the Affronts of mean Conquerors; and by such Hands to die a violent Death with Decence.

What Praises then can be worthy of that King, who so much excelled the upper and the lower Part of Mankind in their different Perfections; who out-did the upper in Righteousness and Mercy, the lower in Meekness and Long-Suffering! How shall we be able to extol his Goodness, who could so readily lay down his own Life for his Subjects; when it has been often esteem'd Goodness enough in other Sovereigns, to spare sometimes the Lives of some of their Subject, that have transgressed their Commands! What Title shall we bestow on that Magnanimous Courage, which could endure all the Barbarous Forms of such a Trial and Execution; the Insolence of the Ignominious Judges; the Horror of the Disgui-

Disguised Executioners ; nay, even (pardon the Word, for he pardoned the Thing) the Spittle of his Inhumane Persecutors ! Could suffer this with as much unconcerned Easiness, as if it had been only the Pomp and Solemnity of his Coronation !

To witness all this, I might challenge the Testimony of those very Servants, that were, by his Adversaries, imposed on him in his Restraints : Of whom, many were converted by his Sufferings, who had been his most bitter Enemies whilst he flourished. I might alledge his Speeches, his Conferences, his Personal Treaties, his Conversation, his Immortal Writings, all composed in his greatest Distresses ; some near the very Sight of the Scaffold. They tell us, that when *Cæsar* swam for his Life amidst his Enemies, he had such Presence of Mind, as to swim with one Hand, and in the other to hold up his own Book, and save it from perishing. But when the King was encompassed with far greater, inevitable Dangers, he not only preserved, but wrote that Book ; to which, amongst all the Writings of Princes, I know none equal but *Cæsar's*, if his ; none superior, but *David's* and *Salomon's*.

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But what need we seek farther for a Proof of his Royal Courage, and Christian Patience, than to the very Men that conquered him? And that not only now, when they have so many Reasons to condemn their own Cruelty towards him: And, of all Reasons, Two most unanswerable Ones; I wish they would think so; his own pardoning them, and his Son's confirming his Mercy. But we may even venture to appeal to their Opinions and Censures of him, when he was in his lowest, they in their highest, most insulting Condition.

His Enemies had him long amongst them: Long they had all his nearest Concernments open to their Discovery: His Chambers, his Cabinets, his very Body and Heart. The last Part of his Life they forced him to pass in a Camp, or Prison, or Hall, or Scaffold. There were no secret Conveyances of a Palace; no officious Silence of Servants; there all his Behaviour was exposed to the View of all, and chiefly to those that mortally hated him.

And what the least Indecence or Weakness did they discern? What the greatest Resolution, and Heroick Spirit, did they not see in him? Did at any Time any Word, or even Murmur of Discontent, come from him, for which

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he ought to have been Jealous of his Enemies Presence? Nay, rather, might he not, in all, have wished for their most exact, and severe Observation? For what did or could they observe? What in all his Discourses, but great Truth oppress'd, and yet Gloriously prevailing? What in all his Private Actions, but the most unaffected Modesty, and Devotion? What in all his Publick, but unmoveable Constancy, and, the most invincible Thing in this World, an humble Conscience well assured?

How many various distracting Thoughts of Hatred and Disdain, of natural Tenderneſs and Affection (not to speak of Fear, or Desire of Life) might often then have assaulted a weaker Heart, in any one of all the dismal Degrees of his Passion! Was it not then enough to discompose and shake a Mind less establish'd : Or then, when, instead of the most flourishing Court of *Europe*, he saw himself long abandoned to silent Walls, or Rocks, and Seas, and yet more cruel Guards? Or then, when in his Solitude he cast his Thoughts back on his Travels Abroad, where he was the Love and Delight of Foreign Courts; and, on his Return Home, when the whole Nation seemed, for Joy, to go
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out beyond its own Shores, to meet him: And now to find, that the same Nation lay so quiet and astonished at his approaching Murther? Or then, when he reflected on the spotless Innocence of his whole Life, and compared it, as he well might, with other Princes his Contemporaries: And yet observ'd the strange Difference that Heaven had made in their Fortunes? Or then, when he found, that after the greatest Hopes of Peace, and Accommodation, he was so suddenly, so unexpectedly hurried to Destruction, that even many of his Enemies could not keep Pace with the Rest, in their Cruelty? Or, when he saw, that all the second Attempts of his Loyal Friends had proved as unfortunate as the first? Or, when he remember'd the Innocence, and the Calamities of the absent Parts of himself, and took his last Leave of those his Children that were present? Or, when he beheld the Places of his Trial and Martyrdom; the one the chief Seat of his own Justice, the other of his former Splendour?

Or when— I can go no farther; for this can scarce be spoken without Tears: And Tears will not become a Death so Triumphant. Let it suffice, that, in
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all this, he was not without all natural Affections; nor can any Man, that is, be truly Magnanimous. Two Things, indeed, came near his Heart: The Misfortunes of his Family, and Friends; and the Slavery in which he saw his Subjects were going to be intrall'd. These only could touch, yet even these could not disorder his Soul, nor weaken his Faith in God; to whom he meekly resign'd his own Private, and the Publick Cause, which was his own too; and by a Divine Spirit foretold the happy Recovery of both.

Let therefore the present Age and Posterity, let all his Friends and Admirers know, what his Enemies could not but confess; that in all his Last Words, and Looks, and Actions, he not only equalled his former Greatness, but he Did, and Spoke, and Look'd, as became the Glory he was going to possess. He parted from his Crowns, as not ashamed to have worn them, nor conscious of deserving to lose them, nor unwilling to leave them. He submitted not to the unjust Sentence, as a King: He yielded to the cruel Execution of it, as a Christian. The dishonourable Part he refused; the painful he accepted. He pleaded not for himself

self at his Enemies Bar, because it was below him: He pleaded, and prayed for his Enemies, at the Bar of Heaven, which only was above him. That Majesty which Nature gave him, he preserved, he improv'd: That Humility, and Charity, which Religion taught him, he practis'd, he adorned.

What Comforter, in so great Tempest, could have inspired him with such Security, such Calmness, such Cheerfulness? Who? But he, whom the Winds and Seas obey'd: He, that walked himself on the roughest Waves; suffer'd himself the greatest Torments, and was able to make his Disciples do the same. Of that Divine Teacher he learnt this Heavenly Truth, *That Persecution is a Blessing*, And, he behaved himself conformable to that blessed Example, as well as Doctrine. He was persecuted for Righteousness Sake; whether we take Righteousness for Justice, or Religion? For both which, he was a Martyr: And, although his Persecutions might seem a Curse to him in this World, because they deprived him of an Earthly Diadem; yet they were a Real, Inexpressible Blessing to him: For he is abundantly, unmeasurably recompenc'd in the Kingdom of Heaven.

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Whether the Kingdom of Heaven be taken, as usually it is in Scripture Language, for the Gospel of that Kingdom; those Truths, and Precepts, that shew the Way to it; or for the Joys of Heaven it self, to which they lead: He certainly has had the Blessings of both: He felt, out of Question, the sincere Comforts of the Evangelical, Doctrine in this World: His Life shewed it; his Sufferings proved it; his Death most evidently confirm'd it. And therefore we have a charitable, undoubted Assurance, that he attained, at his Death, to the other more happy Sense of the Word: That (as he himself, the very Moment of his Expiring, said he should) *He has exchang'd his Corruptible for an Incorruptible Crown*: That the Text of the Sermon, preached before him at his Coronation, though it then might seem Unseasonable, has proved Prophetical; which was the latter Part of those Words, *Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.*

We have now attended this God-like Man, to the End of his Labours: And, as much as we can do by our imperfect Applauses and Congratulations, we have brought him to the End of his

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Faith,

Faith, his Entrance into the Kingdom of Glory. But, I am sensible, that, in Zeal to perform my poor Office to his Ashes, I have too much trespassed on the Patience of this great Assembly. Yet, I was led on by some kind of Confidence, that, having this the Subject of my Discourse, I should not only have your Customary Pardon, and more than ordinary Attention, but the most favourable Concurrence of your tenderest Passions. For though, no less and private Occasions, there is scarce any Sorrow but may be wearied and dried up by the Distance of almost Thirty Years; yet I could not but believe, and you your selves have given me the greatest Reasons imaginable to believe it, that there are none here present, who came not hither still afresh, and most nearly concern'd in the Irreparable Loss of that Excellent King.

Perhaps, some that have heard me this Day, were his own Menial Servants; and so were Domestick Witnesses of his incomparable Goodness, and had a Share in his particular Kindness: Many there may be here, who enjoyed the blessed Fruits of his first Peaceful, most Gen-

Gentle, most Religious Reign : Many I see, who grieved at his Ruine, and indeavoured too to support his falling Greatness with the Hazard of all, with the Loss of much, that was near and dear to them. Even the youngest of us, methinks, cannot but still most sensibly regret his untimely Fall; by which they were deprived of so perfect an Example of all Virtue and Piety; and were forc'd to pass away their first Years, that else might have been most pleasant, amidst the Oppressions and Confusions of their Country.

And certainly, all of us together have just Cause to be humbled, under a Sense of God's Wrath; and to implore his Mercy, that his Royal Innocent Blood, which was spilt for the Church, and has cried from under the Altar, may at length cease Crying : Not only against the Wretched Instruments of that Cruelty, for that also, in our own Charity, and by his Example, we ought to pray for; but that his Blood may cease Crying against the whole Nation it self, which, (How shall I express it without Offence! Nay, how with a just Repentment!) which certainly suffer'd

it by their Negligence : Should I not add, by their Stupidity ? And too much hastened it by their Sins.

And, if we were all cordially thus affected, as I doubt not but we all are, with such Indignation for his undeserv'd Death ; such Veneration for his never-dying Memory : May we all endeavour to express these our Affections, not only by declaring our Abhorrence of those black Counsels, and accursed Practices, which finished the Last Part of his Tragedy ; but even of those that did any Way, though at never so great a Distance, in the least contribute towards it. May all of us, according to our several Stations and Abilities : And, who can have Abilities to do this, if you here present have not ? May all of us be most industriously Watchful, that the same Schismatical Designs, and Antimonarchical Principles, which then inspired so many ill Men, mis-led some good Men, and cost our good King so dear ; may not once more revive, and insinuate themselves again, under the same, or newer and craftier Disguises, and find an Opportunity to attempt the like Mischiefs.

For the present, Let us all join in our hearty Prayers to Almighty God, That
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he would be pleased to pardon to us,
and to our Country, this Heinous,
Publick Sin, by the same infinite Com-
passion, by which we can only expect
Forgiveness of our own particular Sins;
By that Blood, which speaks better
Things than the Blood of the most
Righteous *Abel*, or *Charles*; By that
Blood, which is more Precious than
the *King's*: By the Blood, and Merits,
and Intercession, of *Jesus Christ* our
Lord. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

...the House of Commons...

...be pleased to ...
...Country ...
...the same ...
...which we ...
...of our own ...
...blood ...
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...1712...

A
SERMON

Preached at the
Anniversary Meeting

OF THE
S O N S
O F

Clergy = Men,

In the Church of S. Mary-le-Bow,
November 7. 1678.

By *THOMAS SPRAT, D.D.*
Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

L O N D O N,
Printed for *Charles Brome, 1710.*

ST. R. M. O. N.

Preached at the

Ministry of the

OF THE



St. R. M. O. N.

In the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields

November 7. 1878

BY THOMAS ST. R. M. O. N.

Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty

LONDON

Printed for Charles Thomas, 1878

To the Right Reverend

FATHER in GOD,
JOHN

Lord Bishop of *Rochester*,

PRESIDENT:

And the rest of the Governours of the Charity, for Relief of the Poor Widows, and Children of *Clergy-Men*.

MY LORD,

Since your Lordship, and the Governours of this Pious Foundation have, by your Commands, laid a Necessity upon me of Printing this Sermon: I think I ought rather to be wanting in Prudence to my self, than
in

The Epistle Dedicatory.

in Respect to you. I cannot but venture the Publick Censure, to serve a Design; for the Promoting of which, you all contribute so much more, by your Exemplary Zeal, and Beneficence. You, my Lord, especially, whom all acknowledge to deserve, by your Generous Heart, and Liberal Hand, the Two great Titles you possess: Of Disposing his Majesty's Alms; and Governing this Royal Corporation of Charity.

MY LORD,

I am Your Lordships

most Humble, and

most Obedient Servant,

Tho. Sprat

A
SERMON

Preached before the

SONS

OF

Clergy-Men.

GAL. VI. Ver. 10.

*As we have therefore Opportunity,
let us do Good unto all Men, espe-
cially unto them who are of the
Household of Faith.*

THese Friendly and Charitable Meetings, Men, Fathers, and Brethren, you have now, by the Blessing of God, for several Years renewed, with no just Offence to any, though with the Grief and Envy,

vy, perhaps, of some who are not of our Household of Faith, but to the Comfort of all that are, for the present Benefit and Relief of many, and with well-grounded Hopes and Presages of much greater Things for the future.

Of these our Annual Solemnities, there being Two principal Intentions; the one, to answer a most unjust Objection of the Enemies to the married Clergy, by shewing a full Appearance of their Children, who are in a Condition to credit the Church, and serve their Country? The other, for Relieving those of the same Descent, who may have been reduced to Distress and Poverty. For the First of these, I need no other Defence, no other Commendation, than this very Company to which I speak: For what Argument, either Civil or Ecclesiastical, can justify, can commend the Marriage of Church-men, and vindicate our whole Reformation on that Account, if this Sight be not sufficient to do it? This Assembly, the lawful Offspring of such Marriages, the genuine Seed, the proper Issue of the Reformation; and if you permit me to say it, I dare say, the Honour of it too. An Assembly composed of Men considerable in all worthy Professions, eminent in many Ways

Ways of Life ; all honest Ways, some venerable, some honourable : Men favoured by God in your Birth, your Education, your several Stations in this World : So far above what the Adversaries of our Church most injuriously upbraid, so far above Contempt or Meanness, that you are plentifully bless'd by our Gracious God with Abilities, and, which is more, endued by him with Hearts too, to do Good to others.

In that Part therefore of our Design in this Meeting, which concerns the Vindication of our whole Race, I will use no other Apology : If I intended a Panegyrick, I should need no other, but only this one answerable living Argument, which you your selves here present afford me.

The other great End of it, which is Charity towards those of the like Original with our selves, whom their Necessities may have made unable, asham'd perhaps, to appear amongst us at this Time. The Recommendation of so prudent, so pious a Work, deserves certainly to be the chief Subject of the Preacher, the chief Duty of the Hearers and Preacher, in all such Assemblies of Men of our Extraction ; and in this of this Year,

Year, in a special Manner, for an extraordinary Cause.

For your former worthy Beginnings of this Kind having lately received Encouragement by a Royal Establishment, I cannot but believe that this Advantage has inspired all your Hearts with the most chearful Resolutions, to perfect, by the Help of so great a Patronage, what you your selves had before so generously attempted: That what you have hitherto done in your private Bounty, as a secret Free-will Offering, you will persevere to do, and do much more, now you are invited to it by Publick Authority; now you are admitted by the King himself into a Share with him, as I may say, in one of his most Sacred Offices; are become *Nursing Fathers* too of the Church: He of the flourishing Part; you under him, of the afflicted Part of the Church of England.

Isa. 49.
23.

Wherefore, entreating first your favourable Interpretation, that by reason of the Sickness of a Reverend Prelate, who had undertaken this Employment, I have been over-ruled to approach this Place, so much out of my own Order, so very much in all Things unequal to those who have gone before me; that I may

may (now I am here) be somewhat Serviceable to the great Charitable Design of this Congregation, I have chosen to speak on this Scripture ; in which we find a serious Exhortation of the Apostle to all manner of Charity, in its largest Extent ; *The Doing Good to all Men !* And then directed and limited in Two Particulars, of Time, and Persons. It is to be practised, with regard to some Times above others : We are to do Good, *as we have an Opportunity.* It should be with a careful Choice and Preference of some Persons above others : To All, but *especially to the Household of Faith.*

According to this plain Method, my following Discourse will be most naturally divided.

First, As the Foundation of all, we are to suppose this most Christian Principle, That, by the Obligation of our Holy Faith, we are all indispensably bound *to do good to all Men.*

Secondly, We may observe, That though our Charity should be Universal ; yet as it cannot be actually exercised, but on particular Times, so it should be chiefly on special *Opportunities.*

Thirdly, We must conclude, That the true, Evangelical Charity, may and should admit of different Measures and
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Degrees; though it ought not to be confined to any, yet should principally be applied to the Household of Faith.

That the true Profession of Christianity, inviolably engages all its Followers to do good to all Men, I will not here much labour to prove, but rather take it for granted; the very Repetition of this Truth giving a sufficient Confirmation to it, in any Assembly of true Christians: Much more in such a one, as you are; whose Fathers, by Virtue of their Holy Office, were appointed the Special Guardians of the great Doctrine of Charity, and Teachers of it to the rest of the World. To you therefore it may well be esteemed as a Domestick Doctrine, received by you almost with your first Milk, as one of the very first Elements of your Religion.

A Doctrine, that is represented to our imperfect indeed, but yet to our sincere, Imitation, in the glorious Primitive Pattern of most perfect, most adorable Goodness in the Divine Nature it self: By which the whole Frame of the Creation, the whole Stock of Mankind, the sound, the unsound Part, the Good, the Bad, were all made, and have been always sustained, and encompassed with such inexpressible Grace,

Grace, such abounded Mercy, as is always ready for those that desire it; always finds out those that seek for it; often stands in the Way of those that would avoid it; and overtakes them that fly from it.

From that most blessed Original of doing Good, that is essential to the infinite Being our of our Creator, we have an excellent Copy transcribed for all our Use in the Gospel; here made necessary to us by innumerable Precepts; here illustrated to us by a most Gracious Example; here made easie for us by Promises of Divine Assistance; here render'd pleasant and profitable to us by Assurance of unspeakable Rewards.

This Doctrine of God's Good-will towards Men; this Command of Mens proportionable Good-will to one another; is not this the very Body and Substance, this the very Spirit and Life, of our Saviour's whole Institution? It is intermingled with all the Truths He teaches: It overspreads and gives one Colour to all his Precepts; 'Tis the very distinguishing Character of the Christian Law; by which that has exceeded, and advanced all the true Dictates of Natural Reason; by which it has excelled, and put to Shame, all the best Pretences

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of false Worship ; nay, by which God himself seems to have made the last Addition to his own Discoveries and Instructions to Mankind : For as in many other Things the Gospel appears, in Respect of the Law, to be a clearer Revelation of the mystical Part ; so in this it is apparently a far more benign, more generous Dispensation of the Practical Part of the True Religion.

In this Matter, what need we Christians be our own Witnesses, or our own Judges ? We might refer the Examination of it to any sober judicious Heathen, or unprejudiced Jew, if any such could be found. 'Tis true, they might at first Sight observe the common Practice of too many, that call themselves Christians, to be very different from the Doctrine they seem to own. They might justly wonder, that Men so taught, so obliged to be kind to all, gentle to Strangers, merciful to the Afflicted, loving even to Enemies ; should behave themselves in every Point so contrary to such Heavenly Instructions, such Indissoluble Obligations ! That so many, that any fierce, stubborn, revengeful, avaritious, uncharitable Passions, could possibly spring up under the Shadow of such a Religion ! Nay,
that

that some Men should make such a Religion, and their Zeal for it, to be the Pretence, and Excuse, even to justifie, even to sanctifie such Passions!

All this, the Adversaries of the Faith have too much Reason to object against too many of its Professors; but against the Faith it self, nothing at all. In that all Things of this Nature must excite their Admiration, or overwhelm them with Confusion. Should the wisest Heathen search into all the highest Flights of their best Moralists; should the most devout Jew recollect the most Virtuous Counsels, and Traditions of their Patriarchs, and Prophets; and then should both these compare what they can find in either of them, with the free-spirited, the large-hearted, the universally-charitable Design of the whole Tenour of our Blessed Saviour's Teaching, and Life; and that unanimously expounded by all the inspired Writers after him; and they must both at last agree, that here are introduc'd far more Heroick Principles of Meekness, Forgiveness, Bounty, and Magnanimity, than ever all the Learning of the Heathens could invent, or all the Antiquity of the Jews could boast of.

What could the Light of Nature, what could the Mosaical Shadows, which yet were clearer than that; what could either of these produce, that is comparable to the true Evangelical Spirit? By our Law of doing Good, no Good is to be left undone towards all, not the Good of the Tongue, the Hand, the Heart; none is to be done unwillingly to any; none only for our own Sakes, none only in one Season, but always. Here are confirm'd all our other Natural, Civil, Political Ties of mutual good Offices; nay, here, when they are not, or cannot be mutual: Here many new Titles of Kindness, many new Relations of Endearment, are superadded to them: Here the Foundations, the Desires, the Occasions of Envy, Malice, Covetousness, Revenge, are abolish'd: Here a new Race of Virtues, and Graces more Divine, more Moral, more Humane, are planted in their stead.

If I will believe, and obey the Gospel, no Difference of outward Condition, no Calamity, no Misery, can make any Man not to be equal to me, or to deserve my Neglect: No Distance of Place, no Strangeness of Country, no Contrariety of Temper, or Interest, can make any Man a Stranger to me, or to deserve

deserve my Indifference : No ill Will, no ill Speech, no ill Deed of another against me, can make any Man an Enemy to me, or to deserve by Hatred. With Men, indeed these Considerations are usually, naturally the Causes of Despite, Disdain, or Aversion from others : But with God, they seem to pass for so many New Reasons of our greater Tenderness towards others ; even as so many New Degrees of our Consanguinity with them.

Should we not do Good to Strangers? The Gospel allows no such Term, as a *Stranger* : Makes every Man my *Neighbour*. Should we not *forgive our Enemies*? Those that curse, persecute, and would destroy us? The Gospel knows no such Thing, as an *Enemy*. *We are to bless, to pray for, to love our Enemies*: And Mat. 5. 44. if not for that very Reason, yet notwithstanding it, ought we not to pity, and supply the Poor, and Afflicted, tho' they have no Relation to us? That cannot be. The Gospel styles them all, our Brethren : Nay, they have a nearer Relation to us, our Fellow-Members : And both these, from their Relation to our Saviour himself ; who calls them, his Brethren, his Members ; and makes them his proper Charge, his peculiar Care :

Titles of Honour and Privileges, which the Rich, and the Great, as such, can never deserve; and will never have, unless they employ their Riches, and Greatness, for the Help and Protection of these the true Wards, and Children, and Friends of God.

Wherefore since we are to do Good to the Poor, to Strangers, to Enemies; those whom Nature is too apt to make us Despise, Disregard, or Hate; then undoubtedly we are to do Good to *all Men*, to all Men, *as we have an Opportunity*, which is my Second Particular.

I cannot but take Notice of the Fullness of the Original Phrase in this Place. For though it is evident, that the Holy Ghost is scarce ever so Various, and Copious, and Efficacious, on any one Divine Argument, as when it recommends to us the great Duty of Charity; yet there are few Expressions, on this very Subject, so Expressive; none, I think, more powerful than this, throughout the whole Scripture.

First, 'tis here said, *ἡ ἀγαθὴ*, a Word that signifies, not only some empty Good-will, and good Wishes; not only some verbal Assistance, or the cold Comfort of barren Promises; not only
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some slender kind of good Work, perform'd by Chance, with little Cost, or no Pains : But an active, expensive, indefatigable Goodness ; such as our Apostle elsewhere, in Two several Places, calls a *Work, and Labour of Love*. 1 Thess.
1. 3.
Heb. 6.
10.

Secondly, 'tis said, ἐργαζόμεθα τὸ ἀγαθόν, which may be translated, not only *doing Good*, but *the Good* ; the Good, I suppose, that others Necessities most call for, and our Circumstances most enable us to perform ; and so implying much cautious Care, and Circumspection, in suiting the Kinds of our Relief to our own Abilities, and to the Wants of those we would relieve. And a doing Good in this wise manner, this truly Gospel-Sense is a wonderful Addition to the good Action it self. Of so beautiful, and aimable a Thing as *Charity* is, nothing can more encrease the Lustre, and Beauty, than a prudent Election of Objects, and a fit Application of it to them. In good Works, as in all other good Things, there may be Goodness in the General, but Decence and Gracefulness can be only in the Particulars, in doing the Good.

Thirdly, therefore, to make this De-
 cence of our Beneficence compleat, 'tis
 added, That we must do it, *ὡς καὶ ἔχοντες*
ἐχόντες, as we have Opportunity. Most of
 the Learned Versions only render it,
whilst we have Time: Whilst by the Fa-
 vour and Long-suffering of Almighty
 God, our frail, and uncertain Lives are,
 for this very End, prolong'd to us in
 this World: Which is our chief Op-
 portunity of doing Good; as after this
 Life, begins God's chief Opportunity of
 Recompenſing us for ſo doing. But in
 all Works of Bounty, and Liberality,
 ſomething more is to be conſider'd, be-
 ſides the Occaſion of the Givers; and
 that is, the Occaſion of the Receivers:
 And therefore our Tranſlation takes in
 both; rightly ſays, not only whilst we
 have Time, but, *as we have Opportu-
 nity*.

Opportunity is in Reſpect to Time, in
 ſome Senſe, as Time is in Reſpect to
 Eternity. 'Tis the ſmall Moment, the
 exact Point, the critical Minute, on
 which every Good Work ſo much de-
 pends; that whenever you juſt light
 upon it, it is able to make all your Re-
 ligious Performances more eaſy to your
 ſelves, more beneficial to others, more
 acceptable to God himſelf. Has not
 every

every, common Action of Life, every Virtue in Morality, and so every Grace in Christianity, its due Season, its proper Time? Out of which, whenever it is practis'd, I will not say, it changes its Natures, and becomes Evil; but most truly it loses very much of the Comeliness, and Vigour, and Ornament of its Goodness.

There is, says the Wise Man, *a Season, and Time*, that is, *an Opportunity to every Thing*: The same which the Poet means, when he says, *καὶ ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ* Hesiod. *ἀείδει*. So your Christian Fortitude *ἔργα καὶ* and Patience have their *ἰσχύς* *Opportunity* in Times of Affliction, and Persecution: So your Temperance, and Humility have theirs in Plenty and Prosperity, especially unexpected Prosperity; so your Devotion has its *Opportunity*: *We must* Ephes. 6. *pray always*, but chiefly at certain Times; 18, on stated Days, in most solemn Places: So your Fasting, Contrition and Mortification, when the Church and State appoints, and that especially in Times of greater Riot and Luxury: So true Zeal, in Times overflowing with Atheism and Prophaneness: So Moderation and Christian Prudence, in Times abounding with blind and furious Zeal: So all the rest: So Charity has its *Opportunity*, as well as the rest. In-

Indeed, so Diffusive, so Comprehensive, so Catholick a Grace is Charity, above any of the rest; that whatever Time is the special *Opportunity* of any other Moral Virtue, or Christian Grace, that very Time is also the special *Opportunity* of Charity. It must immediately, inseparably, attend all your Christian Fortitude, your Patience, your Devotion, your Mortification, your ~~Reu-~~ dence, your Zeal. In whatever Heart or Head any one of these takes Possession, it must never go single; it must bring Charity with it, or it is there it
 Ps. 145. 9. self in vain. *Mercy is over all God's Works*, and would be in all ours.

Such is the large *Opportunity* of Charity, whereby it is made the constant Companion and Perfection of all Virtues; impower'd to enter into every one of their Provinces: And well it is for that Virtue, where it most enters, and longest stays. Indeed, so much Employment it has, that whoever shall read over
 1 Cor. 13. St. Paul's Enumeration of the Duties incumbent upon it, he might almost conclude, that well-nigh the whole Business of Christianity is laid on the
 Verse 7. Shoulders of Charity alone. *Charity bears all, believes all, hopes all, endures all; and much more to the same Purpose.*
 What

What can be spoken more effectually ? Whereas the same Apostle, in the same Chapter, tells us, *That of the Three Things which remain, Faith, Hope and Charity, the greatest is Charity* : Here much more is said ; not only that it is greater than Faith and Hope, but that *it believes all, hopes all it self* : Has all these other Graces, and their Opportunities, contained within it self.

Certainly therefore Charity is the *it is said* here intended ; not only a Good, not only the chief Good, but that without which nothing else can be good.

Yet besides this general Opportunity of Charity, which, you see, is common to it with all other Goodness : It has also many Opportunities peculiar to it self. As when it is to be practis'd towards Persons of great and undeserv'd Wants, or of extraordinary Merits, or of extraordinary Demerits : That is one great Opportunity of Charity. Or when in Places, that can shew very few and little, or very great and many Instances of Beneficence ; that is another of its Opportunities : That where there are few, and small Examples of good Works, they may be increas'd ; where there are many and great, they may be encouraged to continue. Or in Times of publick

lick Fasting, Mourning, and Humiliation; that is another Opportunity of it: For the best Sign, and Fruit of denying our selves, is Mercy to others. Or in Times of Thanksgiving, of remarkable Temporal or Spiritual Blessings; in Times of Joy, and Feasting, and Enlargement of Heart; that is another. In all such Times, when we more freely enjoy the Bounty of God our selves; we make it an Imputation to us, if we do not take Care, that others also shall partake of some Good by it. Such honest Refreshments, and Comforts of Life, our Christian Liberty has made it lawful for us to use: Our Temperance and Sobriety in using them, will make them innocent: But nothing can render them truly Christian Comforts, except the Mixture of some good Work of Kindness and Liberality with them.

Jude,
ver. 12.

De Sen-
Elate.

And therefore the only Feasts we read of in Scripture, amongst the Primitive Christians, besides the great Feast of the Holy Communion, were their *ἀγάπαι*, their Feasts of Charity. Cicero brings in Cato reproving the Levity of the Greeks, for calling their Festival Meetings *συμπόια*, from their drinking then together: And rather commends the Gravity of the Romans, who named such Meetings *Convivia*, from their living and conversing

versing then together. But we Christians have another manner of Example to follow, from our First Predecessors *ἀρχαίους* of Tertul. which the very Word may teach us our Apo. cap. Duty in them: For these took their Name 39. where they are not from the Mirth, not from the Conversation, but only from the Charity of the Guests. That, indeed, is the only Thing that can season all our Mirth, that can sanctify all our Freedom on such Times: That, indeed, is the only true Christian Life. described.

I come in the Third Place to examine, what ought to be the proper Object of a Christian's doing Good. It must be done to all, but *especially to the Household of Faith*: Which is the last Particular in my Text. 'Tis manifest throughout the Bible, that besides the whole compass of Heaven and Earth, in which God is pleas'd to reside, therefore calling *the one his* Mat. 5. Throne, *the other his Foot-stool*; though 34, 35. both are far from containing his Immen- sity; but besides that more ample Habitation of his Power, he has always condescended to take to himself, amongst the Sons of Men, a peculiar *Household* of his Love: Which, in all Times, he has cherish'd as a Father, by his Special Providence and Affection; and govern'd as a Master, by a private Oeconomy of his own. This

Eph. 2.
12.

This is the proper *Houſhold of Faith*. And, in the Firſt Ages of the World, 'twas ſometimes literally no more than a ſingle Houſhold, or ſome few Families. Before the Fall of our Firſt Parents, it could be no otherwiſe; and after it too, 'twas ſo for ſeveral Generations: Whilſt the Myſteries and Worſhip of the true Religion were almoſt confined to the Succeſſion of one beloved Race, and the reſt of Mankind left to be, what they had made themſelves, *Aliens and Strangers*.

Nor ought any to repine on this Account, at the unſearchable Judgments of God, that ſo many were at once excluded out of his Family. Ought not all rather, we eſpecially, to admire and adore his apparent Mercy, that any were ſtill permitted to have a Right in it; ſince none could merit, all had forfeited that Right?

But in proceſs of Time, when this choſen Family was multiplied into a Nation, that Nation too became the *Houſhold of Faith*; a greater, but ſtill a Houſhold: Limited in its Members, almoſt to one People; in its publick Worſhip, almoſt to one Houſe: But ſtill a *Houſhold of Faith*: A *Faith*, that was true, though obſcure; a *Faith*, that had

had then the Hope of *Things not seen*, though it was not, as afterwards under the Gospel, *the Evidence of such* Heb. II. *Things.*

Under the Gospel, indeed the next and the greatest Increase of this *Honshold of Faith* has been made: When by the Universal Administration of Grace, begun by our blessed Saviour, enlarged by his Apostles, carried on by their immediate Successors, and to be compleated by the rest to the World's End; all Types that darken'd this Faith, are enlighten'd; all Veils that hid it, are rent, and taken away; all *Walls of Pre-* Eph. 2. *paration broken down*; all Confinement to ¹⁴ Families, or People; all Narrowness of Opinions remov'd; all Nations under Heaven invited; some of all received into this *Honshold*: Which therefore has taken to it self, as it deserves, the most *august* Name of *Catholick*; that, without it, no other House, nor Religion, nor Empire, could ever justly claim; nor within it, can any one Church above others rightly pretend to it, but only all together, united in the same Faith, the same Hope, the same Charity.

Such

Such have been the different Extents of this *Houſhold of Faith*, through all its Succeſſions. And what all along were the different Ranks? What the diſtinct Offices? What Degrees of Privilege, and Command, maintain'd amongſt all its Members? None at all? Yes, certainly very much of all. In ſo Divine a *Houſhold*, ſo united in one *Faith*, were there no other Means of Order, or Methods of Union? No Superiority of ſome? No Submiſſion of others? No Reverence towards any? How could it then be a *Houſhold*? A Herd of wild Beaſts on the Mountains, a Savage Drove of Men in Caves might be ſo order'd, or rather ſo diſorder'd: But never a *Family*, a *City*, a *People*, a peculiar *People*; all which the *Houſhold of Faith* is often called: For to all theſe, Obedience, and Subordination, Government, and Subjection, are moſt neceſſary for their Well-being, for their being in a Civil State; certainly therefore as neceſſary to a Spiritual Family, and City, and People.

Can there be any Reaſon imaginable, why the *Houſhold of God* alone ſhould throw off all that Rule, and Diſcipline, that orderly Dependence, and Duty, and Service, by which all other Houſes

in

in the World are best govern'd? Nay, by which they can only be well govern'd? No. So far is an Indistinction of all Persons, or Equality of all Orders, and, by Consequence, an Anarchy of all Things; so far from being agreeable to the Will of God; declared in the Beautiful and Harmonious Frame of his great Household, the World, and especially in all the Ministeries of proper Household, the Church; that there was never yet any Time, since the Church was a considerable Number; I believe, since it was a Number; when some of its Members were not more Sacred than others, when some were not appointed Spiritual Rulers, some Temporal Governors, some both over others.

The *Patriarchs* were indubitably invested with both these Authorities. In *Moses*, and *Aaron*, they were divided in Persons; but still united as in Brethren. In the *Jewish* State, of which every Part was of God's own prescribing; 'tis needless to tell, how great was the Pre-eminence of the Priestly Office; how sacred their Degrees; how separate, how plentiful their Maintenance.

Or if that Example be not Spiritual, be not Christian enough; What can be more Christian, more Spiritual, than our Blessed Saviour's making the like Distinctions between his own Evangelical Ministers? His sending not all his Disciples equally; but first his Apostles, and them chiefly? And his empowering them to send others with the like Differences? As is plain from their Practise. And of those very Apostles, (for I see not why, as we pass, we may not plead our own Cause too) of those Apostles some, even the greatest married Men; of their Successors, many married Men: All endued with indeliable Power from Above, to feed, to govern this Household; to create, to continue a Succession in it; to consecrate, to ordain Pastors, and Stewards of it, to the World's End: All worthy of Livelihood, some of Honour, and, if we will believe St. Paul, even in the Times of greatest Purity and Simplicity, *some worthy of double Honour.*

Luk. 10.
7.

1 Tim. 5.
17.

We have now discover'd, what is the true *Household of Faith*: In general, the *whole Company of the Faithful*, divided in Times, and Places, join'd in *One Mystical Household*: In a particular, more eminent Manner, the *Ministers of that Household*.

hold, the *Dispensers of that Faith*: And so many of the best Interpreters understand my Text.

Hence therefore we behold to whom all Christians are *to do Good*: To all Men; especially to all Christians; more especially to all the Ministers of Christ. And this being laid down, as undeniable, if you give me Leave to make *One short Step* farther, we may then, by an easy and necessary Consequence, reduce this general Advice to our present, particular Purpose.

For if the Fathers, and Husbands of those, whose Relief this your Meeting intends, were *unquestionably of the Household of Faith*, both as the Members and Ministers of it; and if on that Account all were especially *to do Good to them*; then certainly their Relicts and Children cannot be Strangers in this *Household*; ought not to be Strangers to the *Good*, that is done in it, if they want it. If to the Ministers of Christ, whilst living, *all are to do Good*, as to the *Chief Officers of the Household of Faith*; then certainly, when they have ceased from their Labours, at least as much *to their Posterity*; to whom there is *near the same Obligation*, too frequently a *far greater need*, and *occasion of doing Good*. And

if all Christians are *bound to do Good*, in a peculiar manner, *to the Household of Faith*, so understood; then no doubt *those of the Household it self*, who are in some Estate of *Prosperity*, which, God be pleased, is *your Case*, have much *stronger Ties to do Good to the other Members of the same Household*, who are in Adversity.

You now see, Reverend, and Beloved in our Lord and Saviour, the Course of my Text has brought us to the great Design of this our Assembly; which is Mercy to those distressed Persons, who have the same Relation to this *Household of Faith* with our selves. But before I come to them, I beseech your Patience, whilst I speak something to our selves here present: To whom, from what has been said, methinks a little seasonable Counsel, some honest, humble Intreaties at least, are due from me at this Time; as from all of us, a Relief is due to the others.

We have heard our Common, our Proper Title to the *Household of God* laid open before us. We find our selves inrolled in this Heavenly Family, as Servants, as Sons, as Sons to the Chief and most Sacred part of this Family. The best Philologers say, That the Original Word, *οἰκτι*, which is here translated

flated of the *Houſhold*; does not only ſignifie Domeſtick, as oppos'd to Foreign, to thoſe without Doors; but alſo Private, as oppos'd to Common, and thoſe that are only juſt within Doors. On both theſe Senſes our Claim is founded. We are not only of the *Houſhold*, out of which a great Part of the World is excluded; but we are more privately, more intimately of the *Houſhold*, in which a great part of the Faithful are only as common Members.

Thus we have all a double Relation to it: Some of us a Threefold: All of us as Chriſtians; all as Sons of the Miniſters of Chriſt: Some not only ſo, but as Miniſters our ſelves. And can our Duty then be ſingle? Is there nothing expected from us, more than from other Chriſtians? Does our greater Privilege require nothing from us, but what is common? Yes, certainly very much. Let me briefly put you in Mind, what it is.

First, Since we claim a proper Intereſt, above others, in the Pre-eminent Rights of the *Houſhold of Faith*, then, no doubt, to make good that Claim, we are all proportionably oblig'd above

I 3 others,

others, to conform to the proper Manners, and Virtues, that belong to, and become this *Household*, and distinguish it from all others; then, no doubt, if in every one of such Virtues, whether they respect God, or Man, we do not exceed others, we scarce do our ordinary Duty: What great Deficiency is it, if we come short of Others! What heinous Shame, if we notoriously offend in the opposite Sins!

We have far greater Obligations than all others to do Good: We have not so much as the false Excuses, that some others may think they have, to do Evil. If we forsake the Ways of *Grace and Goodness*, we cannot alledge any *Colour of Ignorance*, or *Want of Instruction*: We cannot say we have not learn'd them, or we could not: Nay, we cannot say, we have *forgot* them. They were familiar to us from our Cradles; imprinted on our Childish Memories; insinuated into our tenderest Age; endear'd to us by the nearest Examples. Virtue in us is not only our Duty, but should be our Portion, our Inheritance. Vice in us were not only Wickedness, but Apostacy, degenerate Wickedness.

Where-

Wherefore of those Graces, which no Christian can be without, we ought to exhibit in a greater Measure: Of those which adorn a Christian Life, we should aspire to the most excellent Degree. Far should be from us, not only *scandalous Evil*, but all *the least Appearance of Evil*: And, as *Cæsar* said of his House, not only the *Sin*, but the *Suspicion*. That spotless Modesty of private and publick Life, that Sobriety of Conversation, that Mildness of Behaviour, that Innocence, that Benignity of Words and Actions, that Liberal, that Generous Spirit, which all other Christians ought to labour after, should look in us, as if they were natural to us, and born with us. In those good Things, which all others are to study and imitate, we are to give, some of us Rules, all of us Examples. What all others should practise, we should scarce know how to practise otherwise.

I urge this the rather, because we live in an Age, when there is an Universal Complaint (and God knows, there is too much Reason for it) of an Universal *Corruption of good Manners*. The *Complaint* indeed is far more general, than the *Endeavours to redress it*. A broad every Man would be a Reformer;

how very few at Home? But, in Truth, if all would really intend an Amendment, and set about it in good Earnest, I cannot imagine any more likely Means to effect it, than to have it seriously begun, and steddily carried on by Men of our Birth.

Great and Powerful, I am confident, irresistible, would be the Influence, which this very Assembly would have on the whole Kingdom. If Judgment begins at the House of God, says St. Peter, where shall the ungodly and wicked appear? And why should we not expect, that Judgment will begin at the House of God, if Reformation begins not there? But then let me add, if Reformation begins at the Household of God, where shall Ungodliness and Wickedness appear? Your Examples will meet it at every Turn; and put it out of Countenance in every Place: Even in private Corners 'twill soon lose that Confidence, which now it too much assumes in publick.

Secondly, This Consideration, That we are all united in One Household, are all of the more inward Part of the same Household, may suggest to us all, That we especially of all Men, of all Christians, ought most to pro-

promote Unity amongst our selves and others.

I beseech you, mistake me not, I do not only mean *our Unity in Matters of Religion* : That amongst us, I suppose, I cannot reasonably suspect, that any of us should be dissatisfied with, or Disobedient to, the Church of *England*. I cannot fancy, That those little Scruples, and groundless Prejudices, and Weaknesses of Conscience, instead of Tenderness, which mislead too many others, too many, otherwise *Good Men* ; should find Place in any of our Minds, against so Pure, so Pious, so Regular, so Moderate a Church ; at whose Breasts we were *more than ordinarily nourish'd* : A Church, which deserves to be to all a *Common Mother*, and is to us *so much more than a Common Mother*.

Wherefore I will not, I need not, undertake to exhort you to an Ecclesiastical Union within *your selves* : I am rather ready to congratulate that to you. But there is another Unity, which, next that in Spiritual Things, would be of all others most delightful to God himself, most advantageous to our Country : And that is, your Endeavour after a Civil, a Political Union in the *whole Nation* ; a fair and candid Correspondence

dence between all Ways of Life ; a strict and friendly *Communion of good and kind Offices*, between Men of all Ranks and Professions among us.

Mat. 12.
25.

This is that, to which I would most earnestly, and I believe I should most seasonably, advise you all. You know who has said, *That every kingdom divided against it self is brought to desolation ; and every city or house divided against it self, shall not stand.* And most certainly, nothing more shakes the Superstructure ; nothing more strikes at the Foundation of any Society of Men ; nothing more disables a House, a City, a Kingdom, from doing good and great Things, than mean Divisions between the several Orders, and Conditions of its Members : Their narrow-hearted repining at each others Gain ; their ill Construction of each others Advantages ; their envying the Fruits of each others Labours : When one Trade or Art, even those that should be the most liberal, shall make it their Business to disdain, and calumniate another ; shall impute the Faults of any particular Men, to the Discredit of any whole Calling : When any distinct Way of Life shall think, that all others enjoy too much Profit,
or

or Power, or Honour; they alone too little.

What can be more destructive to *publick Quiet and Concord*? What to a *private, easy, and honestly pleasant Life*, than in full Peace to have, as it were, an *Open War* between all Professions? For any of the *Clergy* to murmur against the Privileges of the *Laity*? For any of the *Laity* invidiously to aggravate the Rights and Immunities of the *Clergy*? For *Church-men* to look with a greedy, or malicious Eye, on the Incomes or Preferments of Lawyers, or Physicians, or Merchants, or the Gentry, without weighing their Hazards and Expences? For any of these, without regarding the Pains and Burdens of Church-men, to grudge, or upbraid to them those small Remains of Ancient Piety, which the Rapacity of some Ages has left, scarce left to the Church?

Whether this be not on all Sides, a most ill-natur'd, most pernicious Temper; whether it has not too much sowr'd, and infected the Humour of too many of *our Country-men*, I leave you to judge; yet not only to judge, but to you of all Men living, the Cure of this Distemper is to be recommended. You are not only the most proper,

per, but, I believe, the only Instruments capable of effecting this happy Work. Unspeakable is the Opportunity to this End, which is in your Power, that no other Generation of Men can equally pretend to.

'Tis an Evident Observation, That no other One Race, not the Sons of any one other Profession, not perhaps all together, are so much scatter'd amongst all Professions, all Ways of Life, as the *Sons of Clergy-men alone*. Of most others, the Children are commonly bred up in their Fathers Way; or so plentifully provided for, that they are left at large; some few permitted to venture on the Church. But with Church-men, 'tis far otherwise. Their Children, we see, flow abroad, are confin'd to none, overspread all our Ways of Breeding, and Life; our Shops, our Schools, our Universities, our Inns of Court, our College of Physicians, our Towns, our Country, our Court, our Cities: This Court, this City especially.

And if the Dispersion of the Church
 Acts 8.4. from *Jerusalem* by reason of Persecution, first into all *Judea*, then into all the World, became, by God's wonderful Providence, the chief Cause of enlarging

larging the Gospel: Why may not we hope, that the Sons of the Church being so much dispers'd, though, God be thanked, without being driven into all Quarters of the Land, there was some extraordinary Design of Divine Wisdom in it? Certainly, yes certainly, 'twas intended, that we should carry along with us into all other Places, and Professions, wherever our Stations are allotted, some of those good and virtuous Qualities, which we were strangely careless, if we did not bring from Home with us something of that meek, condescending, calm, affable, reconciling, composed, composing Spirit; which if Church-men and their Progeny have not, they cannot pretend to any other Virtues.

We were all born, and grew up in the very native Soil of Modesty, Humility, Peace, and Unity. And if we shall neglect to propagate these blessed Dispositions, in all the other Soils, where so many of us are transplanted; What others can we expect shall do it? What others can undertake it, without some Blemish to us? Some Reflexion on our Negligence? But if we shall endeavour it with Diligence and Constancy, we need not doubt, but, by the ordinary

dinary Blessing of God, our Labours in this Kind will prove the fortunate Means, to make these Virtues thrive elsewhere, Spread every where.

For Proof of all I have said, concerning the Probability, the Certainty of reforming, and uniting the whole Nation by our Example; I crave Leave only to set before you an Image, of what would surely be done to this Purpose, in this one City: Which may well be reckon'd, not only the Seat of Trade and Commerce, not only the Fountain of Habits, and Fashions, and good Breeding, but of morally good or bad Manners to all *England*.

Throughout the whole Extent of this vast City, I know, there is no one Ward, no Parish; I believe, no Street, not many Lanes, where there does not live one or more, that have our Relation to the Church: And live generally in so good a Rank, as will rather invite, than discourage others, to follow what they shall practise.

Now then, if amongst you of our Number, who are Citizens, there were at once begun, by common Consent, an Universal Amendment of Life, and Conversation: If we shall make it our unanimous Business, to oppose the particular

ticular Vices of the Time, by their contrary Virtues ; Schism, by Unity ; Hypocrisy, by sober Piety ; Debauchery, by Temperance ; mistaken Zeal, by true Zeal ; and the like : If so, then the Change will soon appear remarkable ; the Example will be spreading ; Favour, Authority, Credit, Custom, and at last Number too, will be on the Side of Grace and Goodness. And (if you remember, how your City first rose out of its Ashes, after the dreadful Fire, which, no doubt, you can never forget) as that was rebuilt, not presently, by raising continued Streets, in any one Part ; but at first here a House, and there a House, to which others by Degrees were joyn'd ; till at last single Houses were united into whole Streets ; whole Streets into one Beautiful City : So every one of your Houses being first rais'd, and appearing eminent above others in Piety ; others will soon take Pattern and Encouragement from your Building : And so, House by House, Street by Street, there will at last be finish'd, not only, as before, a great and a magnificent City ; but, what is far better, a City, that is at Unity in it self ; a Most, Psal. 122. a Grave, a Religious City : And 3. London will in short Time as much excel

cel it self in all manner of Virtue, as even now I dare affirm, it excels any other City in the whole World, that comes any thing near it, either in Largeness, or Number of Inhabitants.

But Lastly, since we are all of one Spiritual *Household*; and that not only in a Spiritual, but a Temporal Sense; What remains to be said, but that there ought to be maintain'd, between all the Members of this our *Household*, a free, and uninterrupted Communication of our Spiritual, and our Temporal good Things to each other? From the wealthy, and able Part, their Temporal good Things of Bounty and Munificence to the Poor, and Unable amongst us; from the Poor and Unable, the Return of their Spiritual good Things, their Blessings, and Thanks, and Prayers; which cannot be a less Good than they receive; nay, they will be a far greater Benefit to the Wealthy and Able, than these can bestow on them.

I bless God, many of you here present are of the wealthy Part; I see most of you are of the able; none, I hope, of the unable Part. And it was my Intention to have tried, by an ample Exhortation, to excite your greatest Ardour, and most fervent Zeal, in this Work.

But

1. Tim. 4.
1. So interpreted
by Bishop
Sander-
son:
Serm. 5.
ad Pop.

duce into the Catholick Church, what St. Paul calls the *Doctrin* of Devils.

To confute these Men, there were Arguments enough before, drawn from Religion, Scripture, and Antiquity. One Political Argument they seem'd to have, and boasted of it, as unconfutable ; That from such Marriages would inevitably ensue Poverty in many of the Children, and thence a Disgrace and Burden to the whole Church. But by this Design, you have opposed their false Policy, with true and great Wisdom : What they boaded would be a Mischief to us, you are providing shall be one of our principal Strengths : You have consulted, not only the Strength, but the Fame, of the best Reform'd Church : And are freeing it, not only from the Scandal of its Enemies, but even from its own greatest Defect and Inconvenience.

The Opportunity, that is now put into your Hands for this Purpose, is peculiar and extraordinary : Not only of this one Day, or of other such Days, which, I trust, will always succeed this once a Year ; but the sure and solid Foundation of a perpetual Corporation : By which, under a Reign of the great-
est

est Mercy and Clemency that ever the Sun beheld, you are authorized to make this good Work of Mercy a great One; call'd upon, many of you by Name, to do it, by Royal Authority; to which, a constant Obedience, and most dutiful Observance, has been ever the proper, unsullied Honour of your Church, and your Extraction.

The Persons to be reliev'd by you, so nearly approach you all in the strictest Degrees, tho' not often, perhaps, of Kindred, nor always of private Friendship; yet always of Birth, and Interest: That their Support may not only be call'd Bounty in you, but the most Fatherly, or Brotherly Tenderneſs, and even some Kind of Self-Love. From you, their sad Estate may well expect effectual Comfort, since there are none, tho' never so much Strangers to them, from whom it may not deserve Commiseration. They were left destitute, some of Education, all of a Subsistence suitable to their former Life; without any the least Fault of their own; without any Possibility of their preventing it, either by the narrow Provision their Husbands or Parents enjoy'd in their best Condition, or by the unavoidable Fate of their untimely Deaths: Or,

no doubt, some of them, by their frank Hearts, and their open Hands, and their Charity towards others, whilst they lived: Or, which ought to be mentioned for their greater Honour, by their Fidelity to the Crown, and Sufferings for the Church.

On these Accounts, all innocent, some praise-worthy, some honourable, they were expos'd to Hardship, and Penury; to which they had never been us'd, and which, without you, they could never have escaped. Nor was their Poverty all that their Religion would have taught them to endure. But what was far more grievous, and deplorable, their Poverty had expos'd them to be a Cause of Scorn and Derision, an Objection against Religion it self.

An Objection, which now we shall happily see remov'd. For you, who have undertaken their Relief, some of you by God's Blessing on your Labours, some on your Studies, some by God's and the Churches Blessing on your Estates, all of you by some Blessing or other, are abundantly furnish'd with Power; and I know, with Affections; to contribute your Share to this Work. So that tho' it should be true, as I fear it is, that never any Time since the Reformation

formation can shew so many Poor amongst the Widows and Orphans of Church-men, as this particular Time : Yet I believe it to be as true, and we all ought to rejoice at it, that God in his Mercy has now, more than ever, provided and pointed out a proportionable Supply for them within our selves. As more Clergy-men were impoverish'd by the Calamities of the late War, and Oppression of the Church and State, than ever in the like Space before : So, I think, it may be said without Envy, I am sure, if this Work proceeds, it may, that more Clergy-men, or their Heirs, than ever in one Time before, since they were allowed Marriage, have been brought to a plentiful, and prosperous Condition by his Majesties, and with him the Churches, most happy Restoration.

What any of you or your Fathers then received, was never a just Objection against you, because you only receiv'd what was just, and your own : Nay, it has been, and will be for ever, not only no Objection, but for your Praise, and Honour ; that of what you then gather'd, as most lawfully your own, you have since already dispos'd so very much in Works of Pub-

lick Piety and Charity ; and are still ready to scatter much more on this Occasion, for the Good of others.

Scatter much, do I say ? There is no absolute Need of that. For towards your effectual carrying on of this Design, nothing but what may easily consist with your Plenty, your Prosperity; nothing that shall be any way Burdensome, is requested of you ; Only what you can readily spare, from your Necessities, your Occasions ? No, but even from your Pleasures, your Superfluities; only that which to give away will be a Kindness to your selves, as well as to others.

'Tis not the Weight of Bounty, and good Works, from a few, so much as the Number from so many, that is expected to make up and continue this Heap. We have visible Instances in this City, where great, and well-nigh incredible Effects are yearly accomplish'd towards maintaining the Poor of almost all Trades and Callings, only by a constant Multitude, and settled Succession, of small Contributions wisely administred.

And I hope it will never be said, that the Laity, who by the Clergy are taught to be Charitable, shall in their

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Corporations exceed the Clergy it self, and their Sons, in Freeness of Giving. But if any shall think, that in the Practical Prudence of managing such Gifts, the Laity may have some Advantage over the Clergy ; whose Experience is, and ought to be, less of this World than the others : That in your Corporations is most wisely supplied. As there are Church-men enough in this pious Foundation, most able to advise the good Works ; so there are Laymen enough most able to direct their Uses.

To our Laity and Clergy both, my dear Friends, this Institution will turn to inestimable Advantage ; without giving the least Reason to suspect, that any other Course of former Charity will be dried up, or diverted ; but rather all of them will be much increas'd, and more filled, by opening this new Fountain. Such is the Nature of all true Charity : The Practice of it towards any, always enlarges Mens Desires to practise it towards more : Indeed, as a Fountain it flows ; always flowing, when once begun : The several Parts of it, not hindering, but either making Way for, or pushing on each other.

Yet tho' it be certain, that no other Way of Publick Charity has any just Ground to be jealous of this ; I cannot but add, that as to Publick Benefit, this will be inferiour to none, preferable to most others, if not to all : For by this Means, not only many helpless Persons will be provided for, whilst they live; but a Generation of Men will be bred up within our selves, not depending on any other Patrons, not perverted by any other Hopes : And whose Principle, whose Judgement, whose Interest, it will be to obey and support our own Church and State, which cherishes a Married Clergy ; to oppose a Foreign Church, that condemns it ; but whose ill Practises, for Want of it, are one of the greatest Justifications of such Marriages.

*Æschin.
cont. Ctesiph.*

In the *Athenian* State, which was the great Fountain of Learning, and Virtue, to the Heathen World, one of the Noblest Excitements to honourable Actions, was, That the Children of those who had died serving their Country, were bred up at the Publick Charge, till they came to the Age of Manhood : And were then brought forth to the People, clad all in Armour, one of their publick Ministers proclaiming before

fore them; That hitherto, in Remembrance of their Fathers Merits, the Commonwealth had educated these young Men, and now dismiss'd them so arm'd, to go forth, and thank their Country, by imitating their Fathers Examples.

Methinks I may promise, and even foretel, that in your future Processions on these Days, we shall see such a Train of Youth, by you so bred up, and prepar'd for the Service of Church and State; to whom it may be said: Thus far the Memory of your Fathers Deserts has maintain'd you: Now go forth in a lucky Hour: Try to follow their Patterns of Loyalty to the King, and Zeal for the publick Interest: Try to return to your Benefactors, that kind of Gratitude, which of all others will be most acceptable to them: By endeavouring to put your selves into 'a Condition of doing the Good to others that has been done to you: By endeavouring the Peace and Welfare of a Church, to which you owe, not only your Spiritual, but your Natural Life.

A Church, that excels all its Enemies on both Sides; as in many other Things, so especially in the great Doctrine of
Cha-

Charity: In which, the Papists, on the one Side, pretend to be most triumphant: And I heartily wish, too many of the Sectaries, on the other Side, were not apparently too deficient. But our Church has most wisely, most piously chosen, and the blessed Spirit of God has most graciously assisted it in the Choice of the middle Path between both these Extremes. It gives as much Due to good Works, as is consistent with the Grace of the Gospel: It gives as much Preference to Divine Grace, as is consistent with the Precepts of the Gospel: Commands us to return to God, and, as to him, to the Poor, his Gifts, out of meer Duty and Thankfulness; not to deposite them with him, in Hopes of meriting by them; requires us to perform all Deeds of Charity equally to any others, but not with equally presumptuous Pretensions.

Pf. 122.
8, 9.

I shall no longer detain this great Assembly: Only I beseech Almighty God to direct all your Counsels, and bless all your Proceedings, in this weighty Business. *For my Brethren, and Companions sake, I wish you Prosperity: Yea, because of the House of the Lord our God, what good Man will not seek to do you Good? Will not heartily pray, that for*
your

your *Labour of Love* to the distressed Part of the *Houſhold of Faith* here, you may receive an abundant Reward, both here and hereafter? Here, in your Eſtates, your Reputations, above all, in your Conſciences, and Increate of Grace: Hereafter, in immortal Happineſs: When this *Houſhold of Faith* ſhall be chang'd into a *Glorious City*, an *Everlaſting Kingdom*. Of which, I beſeech Almighty God to make us all Partakers. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

before the Sons of Clergy-Men. 183

12 JY 62

A
SERMON

Preached before the

KING

AT

WHITE-HALL,

December 22. 1678.

By *THOMAS SPRAT*, D.D.
Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

L O N D O N,
Printed for *Charles Brome*, 1710.

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WHITE-HALL,

December 22. 1678.

GAL. IV. Part of Ver. 18.

It is good to be zealously affected always in a good Thing.

IN this Chapter, St. Paul expostulates with the *Galatians*, That they were so much degenerated from the true Spirit of Christian Liberty, as to seem desirous of the Jewish Yoke; from which the precious Blood
of

of Christ had set the *Jews* free, certainly therefore the *Gentiles*; the Apostle himself, by his Doctrine, having fully taught them the Extent and Use of that Freedom.

Of which dangerous Error, he discovers the Cause in the 17th Verse. Is it not, says he, *that there are crept in among you deceitful Teachers?* Men, who pretend to be as zealous for you, as we, the True Ministers of Christ, can be? Yet you ought to judge of them, not by the Heat of their Zeal, but by its Effects: *They zealously, says he, affect you, but not well.* For *they would exclude you, or us, as some Copies have it: You, from the True Faith: Us, from being True Apostles.* But Schism, and Separation, Mens unjust excluding themselves or others out of the Church, are always Works of a False Zeal, never Signs of a True. *Wherefore, says he, beware of them:* Their Zeal is the more to be suspected, for being so violent: For though it be good to be zealously affected always, yet it should be only in a good Thing.

My Text, you see, consists of Two Parts:

First, A Just Commendation of True, Religious Zeal: And that in the utmost

Ex-

Extent of it; *It is good to be zealously, zealously affected always.*

Secondly, The due Limitation of such Zeal, so as it may deserve that Commendation: It should be in a good Thing.

The Substance of both is, *That True Zeal is a most excellent Grace: But that the Truth of it is to be esteem'd, not so much by the Height of the Passions, of which it is composed, as by the Goodness of the Things, about which it is employ'd.*

In treating of this Doctrine, it will be needful for us to examine,

First, What is the Name, and Nature, and Causes of True Zeal? That so we may prove it to be a good Thing to be zealously affected.

Secondly, What are the Bounds and Extremes, what the Corruptions and Remedies, of Zeal? That so we may reduce and confine it to its proper Work, which is, to be zealous in a good Thing.

Of these Two Particulars, if now, by the Grace of God, we shall make a right Use and Improvement; the One will excite in us the most Sincere, most ardent Affections towards God, and the

L Things

Things of God; the Other will direct us in the right managing, and applying of those Affections: Which Two are indeed the great Design of all True Religion. This is the Sum of all the Laws of Christ, and his Apostles; that as we should most carefully endeavour to know all our Duties towards God and Man; so we should perform them all, with that unfeigned Integrity which belongs to Christian Piety; with that Temper and Sobriety, which becomes Christian Prudence, and Charity; with that Warmth and Affection, which agrees with Christian Zeal: That is, in other Words, We should be *zealously affected always, but only in good Things.*

The Word *Zeal*, amongst ancient Hea-then Writers, is us'd indifferently in a good, or a bad Sense; but seldom, or never, in a Religious Sense. At best, it is taken by them to express a Man's earnest Desire, and eager Pursuit, of some Temporal Good; and a Grief, that others possess that Good which he wants; especially those who are his Equals in other Things. Very frequently with them, it signifies Emulation, and that Sort of it which is commonly accompanied with Envy and immoderate Contention. And indeed, it were much to be

be wish'd, that in the *Christian Church*, which has advanced the Word *Zeal*, and applied it to a Divine Meaning, there had not been, in all Ages, too many *Christians*, who have been Zealous rather, according to the *Heathen* Signification of the Word, than the *Christian*.

In the Scripture, and amongst *Christian Writers*, when it is used in the best Sense, for what it should be, not what it too generally is, it then passes for a vehement Affection, a restless Heat, a powerful Inclination of the Mind, towards Heaven, and Heavenly Things; chiefly regarding the Divine Author of them, and his Glory; and next Himself, his Truths, his Ways, his Rewards: When with earnest, but harmless Passions, we wish, we contrive, we contend for the Honour of God, the Belief, the Spreading of his Doctrines, the Practice of his Laws, the Flourishing of his Religion, the Enjoying of his Promises, the Peace and Prosperity of his Church; and when most constantly, most irreconcilably, we hate and oppose the Things that are contrary to any of these.

So that true Zeal seems not to be any one single Affection of the Soul ; as are the other *Passions*, of Love, Desire, Hope, Joy, Grief, Hatred, and the like ; but rather it is a strong Mixture of many Holy and Spiritual Affections : Rather a *gracious Constitution of the whole Mind*, than any one particular Grace : Affecting the whole Will, swaying all the Thoughts of a Devout Heart, and filling it with all manner of *Pious Intentions* : All, not only Uncounterfeit, but most Fervent. It is an Addition of a double Measure, and Force, and Activity to that Religion, which was before Sincere. It is to a Spiritual Life, as Health is to a Natural ; renders that which else would *only breathe, and move, not only living, but most lively, and most vigorous*. And as in *Moral Virtue*, there is some more perfect Degree ; that the *Heathen Moralists* call'd *Heroick*, and even Divine Virtue ; which is not it self a distinct Virtue, but the highest Pitch and Eminence of all other Virtues ; and which, they therefore thought, did make Men most nearly to approach the *Nature of God* : So True Zeal may be styled, the *Heroick*, and *most Divine Degree of all true Piety*.

Such

Such is the Name; such, I humbly conceive, is, and ought to be, the Nature of True Zeal: And by this we may guess at the Usefulness of it. The Usefulness do I say? Why not rather the Necessity? In all *Christians*, some kind of Zeal for the Interest and Practice of the True Religion, is not only most beneficial, but most necessary, most inseparable from its Reality.

This will appear to be certain, if we reflect on the Causes, that are able, and are wont to raise Zeal in Mens Hearts. Zeal being the Top, and Perfection, of so many Religious Affections for some Things, against others; the Causes therefore of it must needs be most eminent, most efficacious, in both Kinds. These are Good, or Evil; both in the highest Degree, both in a double Respect: Either the great, and admirable Goodness of a Thing in it self; or its extraordinary Goodness, and Agreeableness to us: And either the exceeding Evil of a Thing in its own Nature; or its Hurtfulness, and Mischievousness to us.

So lovely, so graceful, is all Goodness in it self, that it can scarce be observed by any Man, in its native Beauty, without some Emotion in his Mind to Love,

and obtain it. Some secret Charms it has, that are wont to prevail, not only always on its Friends, but often on its very Enemies. There is no question, but many wicked Men are often touch'd with some inward Reverence for that Goodness, which they cannot be persuaded to practise, nay, which they outwardly seem to despise.

Such is the attractive Force of it, in its general Contemplation. But more, when a Thing that is infinitely good in it self, infinitely better in Nature, greater in Power than we are, shall freely descend down to us, shall condescend to have the nearest Relation to us, shall appear to employ all its high Perfections chiefly for our Happiness, nay, shall, for that End only, take on it self our Imperfections: What Goodness can be more Amiable in general? What more Obliging, more Tender in particular than this? What ought to produce in us more inflam'd Affections, and Zeal for it?

The like may be said on the other Side. Whatever is Evil and Wicked in it self, it is Imperfect, Uncomely, Detestable, even in the Judgment of Nature, of Reason, of Sense it self: And therefore it cannot but raise, in the un-

unprejudic'd Beholders, a general Aversion from it. But more, if the same Thing shall appear to be peculiarly Evil, or Injurious, or Pernicious to us: That general Aversion will be, and ought to be, turn'd into a particular Hatred and Zeal against it.

And now, is there not an entire Concurrence of this double Goodness in the Ways of Religion? Of this double Evil in all Things, that are at Enmity with it? Is not Religion so perfectly good in it self, its Doctrines, its Commands, its Recompences; above all, in its Author; that, without the grossest Sensuality, we cannot but admire it? Will it not be so good and beneficial to us, if we believe, and practice it, that without the most *heinous Ingratitude*, we cannot but be most *zealously affected* towards it?

On the contrary, is not Sin, notwithstanding all the most flattering Colours, and most alluring Shapes, it can put on, when it strives to beguile our weak Senses; notwithstanding all the most specious Disguises, which the Devil, the Father of all Hypocrisy, can bestow upon it; yet is not Sin in its own Nature, most Deficient, most Vile, most

Deformed? Is it not most Pernicious to our Nature? Most Injurious to our true Interest? Most Destructive of our Happiness? Are not the most wicked Men compell'd to confess all this; sometimes in their Prosperity, often in their Adversity? Sometimes with their Tongues, often in their Fears, well nigh always in their Conscience? All this is so perspicuous, so undeniable, that, in a Congregation of Christians, I need not be over-industrious in the *Proof* of it.

These then being the perpetual Causes of Zeal; the greatest Good, or the greatest Evil; either absolutely so in themselves, or relatively so to us; and both Kinds of the *Good* unquestionably meeting in Religion; both Kinds of the *Evil* in its Opposites: It is therefore *good to be zealously affected* for the one, against the other; *to be always zealously affected*: For the same Motives of Zeal continuing in the Things themselves unchangeable, as they do, and will for ever; for ever all *Goodness* will be most charming, for ever all *Wickedness* will be most odious; the Affections therefore, the flaming Love which the one, the vehement Hatred which the other, that is, the Zeal, which they both should stir up in our Minds.

Minds, ought also to be ever unchangeable.

Thus far we walk on firm and even Ground: Thus it is *good to be always zealously affected*. But now begins to appear the Difficulty, and the Danger. For Zeal being compos'd, as you have heard, of the highest Degrees of so many Affections, the true Zeal consisting of the greatest lawful Degrees, the false of the greatest unlawful Degrees of those Affections; the right tempering and moderating of all such Affections, and all their Degrees, in themselves so strong, in their Objects so different, must needs be a very hard, and a very hazardous Work. So it is in any one of all our *Natural Passions*. *Passion* is the great Mover, and Spring of the Soul: When Mens Passions are strongest, they may have great, and noble Effects; but they are then also most apt to fall into the greatest Miscarriages. And are not our most Spiritual Affections as liable to the like *Corruptions*? They are, in Truth, more liable: So much the more, in that Mens Spiritual Failings are harder to be repented of, or acknowledg'd for Sins, than their natural Faults, or carnal Vices are.

Most

Most certainly the strictest Profession of Piety, the severest Appearance of Devotion, the most extraordinary Fervour of Zeal, is most Praise-worthy, most Christian, if undisssembled, if humbly practis'd: But it is not always most free from *Dissimulation*, or *Spiritual Pride*. And if the greatest outward Shew of Zeal for Religion be put on by Hypocrisy, if the greatest inward Heat of it be not sweeten'd by *Meekness*, or not tempered with *Humility*, or not govern'd by Prudence; can it do God any Service? Rather it dishonours him: Can it bring to our own Souls any Benefit? Rather it mischiefs them.

Wherefore it is Prudence, Humility, Gentleness; Things that at first Sight seem most inconsistent with all Zeal, that are the great Security, the best Guards, the Chief Ornaments of all the most Godly Zeal. It is *Mediocrity*, *Decence*, *Integrity*, *Charity*, that are the great Rules, the Standards of Goodness, of Excellence, not only in all Humane Conversation, not only in all Moral Virtue, but even in all our most Religious Duties.

Are not all, or most Evangelical Virtues, and Graces, in Danger of Extremes? As there is, God knows, too often

often a Defect on the one Side, so there may be an Excess on the other. May not Hope in God, or Godly Sorrow, be perverted into Presumption, or Despair? May not Faith in God be depraved by Infidelity, or by Superstition? Men may believe too little; they may believe too much. May not the Worship of God be corrupted by Prophaneness, or by Idolatry? It may be too naked, for want of Ceremonies; it may be too pompous, by an Excess of them. Thus the rest. Thus *Religious Zeal* is subject to an Excess, and to a Defect: Either when something is mingled with it, which it should not have; or when it wants something that ought to go along with it. The Defect of it, is *Lukewarmness*, or *Coldness in Religion*; the Excess is *Inordinate Heat*, and *Spiritual Fury*. It is very natural for Men, very easy for Christians, to offend in one of these: Most natural for all sensual Men to fall into the Defect; very easy for many well-meaning Christians to run themselves, for ill-meaning Hypocrites to thrust others, into the Excess of it. And it is the chief Employment, the best Fruit of that *Wisdom, which teacheth Men to be wise to Salvation, to find out, and to*

to follow the *sober, temperate, middle Way between them both.*

Be pleas'd then, to this Purpose, that we proceed to the *Second Head* of my Discourse; to examine, *What are the due Degrees, and undue Extremes? What the Just Limits, and ill Excursions of Zeal?* And that we first begin with the *Excess* of it.

This indeed is a Subject, of which it is hard to speak without Satyrical Sharpness, and particular Reflections on many Persons and Societies, and even Churches of Christians: So ill have been the Designs, so lamentable the Effects, of intemperate Zeal in all Christendom, especially in our own Time, and Country. Yet let us try to consider this tender Argument so, as not our selves to fall into an Extravagance of Zeal, whilst we condemn such Excesses. So the Meekness of Christianity teaches all Christians, to deal with *Erroneously-zealous Christians*; to pity, not revile, the Persons, whilst we reprove their Errors: To convince their *Contentious and Outragious Zeal*, by the *most Religious*, and, in Truth, the *most powerful, Confutation of a milder Practice*, and *more charitable Examples.*

4

The great Sign then, and Character, in my Text, to distinguish the True Zeal from the False, is *Goodness*: Either the Goodness of the Zeal it self; or the Goodness of the Things about which it is concern'd: The latter being here made a Proof of the former. But besides, the Goodness of the Zeal it self may be discern'd, either by the Light which directs it in the Head, or by the Work of it in the Heart. And so we may safely conclude that to be the only true Zeal.

First, That which is guided by a good Light in the Head.

Secondly, That which consists of good and innocent Affections in the Heart.

Thirdly, That which employs the Head and the Heart about good Things, and those only.

First, we are to inquire, what is the best Guide, and Conductor of Zeal in the Head? For that, we may consult our Apostle in his Epistle to the *Romans*; Rom. 10. Brethren, says he, *My Hearts Desire and Prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved: For I bear them Record, that they have a Zeal for God, but not according to Knowledge.*

In

In which Words, Two Things are observable: The Apostle's Behaviour towards his Brethren in the Flesh, the *Israelites*, who were mistaken in their Zeal for God: And his Discovery of the Ground of that Mistake. His Behaviour is, not to censure bitterly the Errors of their Zeal; but rather to bear Witness to the good Intentions of that Zeal, which they had; and to pray heartily to God, that he would direct their ill-applied Affections, by a True, Heavenly, and Spiritual Light.

Such was his mild and gentle Behaviour, though zealous too for the Cause of Christ, towards the misguided *Israelites*. His Discovery of the Error of their Zeal, and his Reproof of it, follows; it is, that it was *not according to Knowledge*.

And as his Behaviour ought to be an Example for our Practise in the like Cases; so his Reproof may afford us the First most certain Rule to instruct our Judgments, in the correcting of the Erroneous, and directing of the true Zeal.

Behold, I beseech you. That, in Saint Paul's Opinion, is imperfect or false Zeal, which is only hot, and eager without Knowledge: That is the right Zeal,

Zeal, which is not only sincere, and in earnest, but *according to Knowledge.*

According to Knowledge: Another manner of Companion of Zeal, than what too commonly goes along with it. Are not those Men too often found to be the greatest, and do they not think themselves to be the truest Zealots, who are most notoriously Ignorant? Who make it their Business, their Pride, to express their blind Zeal, not only without all Knowledge, but oftentimes against all? Whereas true Zeal should always, being with true Knowledge first; and thence proceed to an unwearied Passion, for what it once knows to be worthy of such Passion: False Zeal always begins with Passion first, and there usually ends; seldom or never goes farther than ignorant and violent Passion.

Our Zeal then should be *according to Knowledge.* And what kind of Knowledge? Without all Question, First according to the true, saving, Evangelical Knowledge.

It should be according to the Gospel; the whole Gospel: Not only according to its Truths, but Precepts: Not only according to its free Grace, but necessary Duties: Not only according to its Mysteries, but also its Commandments.

It

It should be according to the Original Design, Fundamental Principles, and Eternal End of the Gospel: Not so, as to set any one Doctrine, or Work of it at Variance with others; which are all admirably consistent amongst themselves, and agree in a Blessed Harmony: Not so, as only to contend for some Temporary Opinions, or factious false Inferences from the Gospel; which rather serve to uphold the Credit, and Secular Interest of Religious Sects, than for the Honour of Religion it self.

Thus should our Zeal be according to the Gospel, that Knowledge, which descends from Above. But then besides, 'twill do well, if it be also accompanied with some good and grave Degree of Civil Wisdom and Understanding, of sober Knowledge even of this World, and Worldly Things. For though all that profess the Name of Christ, are chiefly in his Religion to be directed by a true Spiritual Light: Yet such earnest and strong Motions of the Mind, as commonly attend Religious Zeal, will receive no manner of Hindrance, but rather great Assistance from the subordinate Help, and faithful Service, and steady Guidance of true natural Light it self.

True Zeal neither is, nor ought to be, a solitary, melancholy Grace: As if it were only fit to dwell in mean, dark and narrow Minds; such as are utterly unprovided of all other natural, or moral, or spiritual Abilities. No. As there is scarce any one Grace, or Gift of God, that ever uses to go alone; but where any one of them enters, others will go with it, or soon follow after it: So especially of all Graces, Zeal ought never to go alone. In whatever Soul Zeal gets the entire Possession, and keeps it singly, without the Society of many other Gifts, or to the shutting out of any one Virtue; there it is a dangerous Guest, there it is an Incendiary. But wherever it is leagued, and joined in Company, with many other Spiritual Endowments, and Advantages of Nature; with a discreet Judgment, a clear Understanding, a well-order'd Devotion, an exemplary Charity; there it is the surest Defence, the greatest Beauty of true Piety; there it gives the brightest Lustre to Religion.

This will appear still more evident in my Second Particular; That recommends to us a Special Care of rectifying Zeal in the Heart: The Heart, which is the proper Seat of this, as of all other

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practi-

Prov. 4.
23. practical Virtues, and Graces: *From the Heart proceed the Issues of Life*; of a Pious, as well as of a Corporeal Life: By the Motions, and Pulses of the Heart, the Temper of our Spiritual, as well as Bodily State, may be judg'd.

In the Heart, Zeal ought to be composed of the highest Degrees of all pious Affections: Of which, some in their own Nature are milder, and gentler; some sharper, and more vehement. It should be made up, I say, of the largest Measures of Spiritual Love, Desire, Hope, Hatred, Grief, Indignation, and the like: Some of these Affections earnestly fixing our Minds on God, and Religion; the others forcibly averting from us those Things, which are displeasing to God, and contrary to Religion.

Now then, That Zeal, which has the greater Mixture of the more gentle, more benign, more charitable Affections, is most likely to be the Best: That wherein the other more harsh, fowre, and angry Passions, have the greater Share, and are Predominant, that is in most Danger to be immoderate, and excessive: That, in which this latter Kind does exclude the former, that is undoubtedly unlawful, and wicked.

This seems to be most agreeable to the great Primitive Purpose of true Christianity; and it may perhaps be more clearly exemplified in an Instance. Our Love of God, his Truths, his Honour; our unquenchable Desires to promote, our well-grounded Hopes to enjoy his Glory; these Affections should certainly take the first, and the chief Place in our Zeal: These can never be too much in earnest: They can never carry out our Hearts beyond due Measure. Our Hatred of those Ways, which God hates; our Grief for, and Indignation against, those Things that displease and dishonour Him; these should have their Turn too in our Minds: These also are very acceptable to God himself. But then there ought to be a much stricter Guard kept on this sort of Passions; that they do not exceed due Bounds; that they do not precipitate us into Violence, or Strife, or Malice; which are condemn'd by St. James, under the Title of *πικρὸς ζῆλος*, that is, *bitter En- Jam. 3. vyng* in our Translation; and this ^{14.} Kind is reckon'd by St. Paul, as one of the most Carnal Sins: For amongst the Works of the Flesh, which he Gal. 5. says are manifest, he Names Murders, ^{19, 20, 21.} Drunkenness, Witchcrafts, Hatred, Variance, Strife,

Strife, Emulations, Wrath, Seditions, Heresies: Where that Word, which we translate *Emulations*, is in the Original, ζήλοι.

And so
in Clem.
Ep. ad Cor.
often.
Arist. Rh.
lib. 2. c.
11.

Thus whatever all pretended Zealots may think of the sublime Purity, and Spirituality of all Zeal, we find some Zeal may be in the Company of the grossest and most sensual Sins; and, you see, from Saint Paul, it deserves the Name of Emulations; from Saint James, the Name of Envy: Of which, although Aristotle allows, that some Emulation may be good, and may be found in some good Men; yet Envy he utterly condemns, as wicked in it self, and only to be found in wicked Minds. And such was that Envy, which moved the High Priests, and Sadduces, to raise the very First Persecution against the Church. When they beheld themselves so much over-match'd by the Glorious Works, and Excellent Abilities, and Divine Authority of the Apostles, 'tis said, ἐπλήθυνον ζήλους; and immediately *they laid their hands on them, and cast them into Prison*. They were fill'd with Zeal, or, as we read it, with Indignation or Envy; the usual Cause and Original of all Sects, and Schisms, and Heresies.

Acts 5.
17, 18.

But

But of that only in passing; It is then most true, that in their Love of God, and Desire to please Him, Men can never be too Affectionate: It is as true, though it may at first seem a Paradox, that in their Hatred of Sin, Men may be sometimes too passionate. Our Love of God, may and should provoke us to love the Things of God, yea, and the Persons, that especially bear the Image of God; to love and reverence them, as much as we can, the more the better. But our Hatred of Sin may carry us insensibly farther than against the Sin; which we should hate altogether; it may involve the Person, which we should not hate at all. For all Hatred of Persons, by very many Christian Principles, we are most solemnly, indispensably forbid. So that the more eager, and sharp Acts of Zeal, are not permitted to all Men always to practise: But the more Tender, more Christian Part of it, is always commanded to all. All are not always bound to hate, and punish, the true Enemies of Religion; much less any whom they may fancy to be so: All are always obliged to love its true Friends, and to pray for its very Enemies.

That is a Second Sign of the true Evangelical Zeal, and Note, for the detection of its Contrary ; it should abound more in the mild and good-natured Affections, than in the vehement and wrathful Passions. An Observation that is the more seasonable to be consider'd, because it is every where very Notorious, and indeed a deplorable Thing in it self; that the Religion, which was intended to reconcile Mankind to Almighty God, whom we had infinitely offended, should not Universally have the like Effect in reconciling Mankind amongst themselves, between whom there can be no such Offences : That in Religion, Men should be generally much more given to that Part, which inclines them to Hatred, Anger, and Censure of Evil Things; than to that, which prefers Brotherly Love, Candor, Good-Will, and Kindness for good Things. Do not too many believe no Religion to be Pure, but what is intemperately Rigid ? No Zeal to be Spiritual, but what is Censorious, or Vindicative ? Whereas no Religion is True, that is not Peaceable, as well as Pure : No Zeal is Spiritual, that is not also Charitable, nay, chiefly so.

The true Zeal should be in Religion; What true Courage is in Humane Nature? None but Minds truly Pious, are capable of the One: None but Minds truly great, are capable of the Other: And they both alike dispose and qualify the Hearts, which they inhabit. You well know that to be the truest Courage, which is not only firm, brave, undaunted, but also calm, inoffensive, slow to Anger, hard to be provoked, or soon reconciled. Give me Leave to add, so should the true Zeal be, not only constant, daring, fearless; but meek, compassionate, long-suffering, easy to be intreated. All other Courage, besides that, is not true Valour, but Brutishness; all other Zeal, besides this, is not a Christian Grace, but Religious Madness.

Having thus declared, what is to be the Composition of Zeal in the Head, and the Heart; of what kind of Knowledge, of what sort of Affections, it ought to consist; I come in the last Place to declare, what is the true Object of it. For that, we need go no farther than to the Words of my Text: *It is good to be zealous in a good Thing.*

Gal. 4.
15.

In a Good Thing. I cannot but observe, First, that it is here only said, a *good Thing*. No Mention is made of Zeal for Good Persons. For though a Zeal for Persons is lawful, nay, commendable: As Saint Paul here commends these *Galatians*, that *They would have given him their very Eyes*: Yet in general, a Zeal for Persons is far less Religious, far more easy to be perverted, than a Zeal for Things. Indeed, scarce any Thing can be more pernicious to Religion, than when its Interest is made a Business rather of Names than Things. May we not impute to this one Mistake, a great Part of all the most dangerous Animosities, and Schisms, that have infested the Christian Church? Have they not most frequently risen from a Factious Admiration of some particular Man, some particular Church, some Head of a Party, some Author of a New Opinion?

1 Cor. 1.
12.

A Corruption that began very early, even in the Primitive Age. Does not St. Paul reprehend his Contemporaries, for saying, not only I am of Christ; but *I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas*? Though he himself was nam'd one of the Parties, yet the rather, the more warmly, he condemns their Partiality:

tiality : The more he undervalues himself, and his excellent Brethren, whose Names were abused in the like manner with his ; Who, says He, is *Paul* ? Who ? *Apollos* ? Who ? They were some of the greatest and most eminent Ministers of Jesus Christ, both in Dignity and Abilities. And can it then be thought Zeal to contend for any other Names, when it was Envy and Strife to set up for *Paul*, or *Apollos*, or *Cephas* ? And was not this Danger most wisely foreseen by the Apostle ? For although neither the ill Use of *Paul* or *Apollos*'s Name did any considerable Hurt, that we know of ; yet the Pretence of *Cephas*'s Name, and Abuse of his Authority, has caus'd the greatest Rents, and Divisions, that ever were in the Christian Church : The Separation of the *Eastern* Church from the *Western*, and of the *Western* within it self.

That is one Fatal Error, when Men imprudently and uncharitably often, seditiously and mutinously sometimes, employ their Zeal for Persons. There is another Fault, that is contrary to this, and full as mischievous, but less taken notice of for a Fault ; nay, amongst too many it passes for a Sign of a good, and godly, and publick Spirit. That is, when

when Men unduly exercise their Zeal against Persons ; not only against evil Persons ; not only against some good Persons ; but against those, who are the most venerable, and sacred.

I would willingly ask any Man, that has but once read the Bible over, whether the whole Tenor of the Divine Law does not positively require Humility and Meekness to all Men ; a Love for Neighbours, that is, in the Gospel Sense, for all Men too ; a due Observance of all Degrees of Men ; a hearty Submission to Teachers ; a Conscientious Subjection to Governors ? Whether all these Duties be not often most Divinely repeated and inculcated throughout the whole Scripture ? Whether, if a wise and honest Heathen should impartially survey our Religion, he would not presently conclude, That the main Practises of it, which concern this World, ought chiefly to consist in this kind of good Offices ? But then I would ask any Man experienc'd in the World, whether the greatest part of all the pretended Zeal of all Sides, in our Memories, has not too much in publick, almost continually in private, spent and vented it self, either in unchristian Censure of Nighbours, or detracting from Superiours, or undervaluing of Teachers,

Teachers, or Slandering of Governors? Slandering? 'Twere well if they stopt there. Slander is an innocent Thing, in comparison of those dire Attempts, in which a Rage of Zeal has engaged too many Zealots against their Governors.

But can that be a Gospel Zeal, which at least is the worst of ill Manners; in truth is most destructive to all Humane Society? A Zeal, which is most levelled against those very Persons, of whom the Laws of Nature, and Morality, and Policy, as well as the Gospel, have commanded Men to think with the greatest Affection; to speak with the greatest Reverence; to Act for for them with most dutiful Obedience: Nay, for whom, if for any, the Gospel has taught them to be most zealous.

On the whole Matter, it is not at all good to be zealous against any Persons; as they are such; but only against their Crimes: It is better to be zealous for Things, than for Persons; but then it should be only for good Things. A Rule, that does certainly exclude all manner of Zeal for ill Things; all vehement Zeal for little Things. The one can only be the Zeal of a wicked Mind: The other only of a light, and vain Mind. Indeed, those Things, in our Phil. 4. selves, 8.

selves, are the only proper Objects of our Zeal, which, in others, are the unquestionable Subjects of our Praises; And that neither ill Things, nor little Things, can be; the one meriting our Hatred, the other a low Esteem, if not our Contempt.

Of ill Things, there is no manner of question. But to determine, what are little Things in Religion, great wariness is to be used. Many think nothing to be truly great in it, but what concerns Christian Faith: Christian Works they respect not so much: Christian Discipline, or Decence of Worship, they regard not at all. But we are to go by another Measure. Undoubtedly, those Things are absolutely little in Religion, that neither in particular, nor in general, conduce to the Advancement of Truth, or Holiness, or Peace, or Order, in the Christian Church. Whatever Things do really contribute to all these Ends, they are absolutely the greatest Things in Religion. Whatever do promote any one of these Ends, though perhaps not equally all, even these are, by no Means, to be accounted little Things.

Thus

Thus the Use of some distinct Habit, or Gesture, or Time, or Place, may seem of no great Concernment in Christian Doctrine: But it is of great Concernment in Christian Devotion, and Discipline. Thus any one particular Decence, in Divine Service, may seem to some no great Thing. But Decence in general is a great Thing: And that must be exercised in some Particulars or other, or it is nothing but an empty Name. Thus any one Ceremony may be esteemed a small Thing, before it is commanded: Yet it cannot be so afterwards. For Obedience is a great Thing; the Neglect of all Ceremony introduces great Disorder; and for Men to withdraw from a True Church, on the Dislike of a few Ceremonies only, destroys all Possibility of Communion.

Wherefore, not only Matters of Belief, but of Discipline, of Order, of Communion, are all, in their several Ranks, Things of great Moment; they are good Things; and so all of them may be, in their Proportion, the proper Objects of an honest *Zeal*. Still I say, in their Proportion: For as nothing but Goodness can make *Zeal* to be profitable; nothing but Goodness can make it not to be dangerous: So in all Things
of

of Religion, there being a gradual Goodness, there may be also different Degrees of *Zeal*.

The First, and principal Share, belongs to the good Truths of necessary Knowledge; or that immediately conduce to Practice: Then to the indispensable Rules of Practice and Discipline; then to the Good Things of Order and Decence. The Distinction between all these, and the Reason of it is manifest. For the Goodness of all Opinions and Ceremonies is to be examin'd not by themselves, or by their own Light, but only by the Goodness of the Works, which attend their Belief and Performance; whereas all necessary Truths, and good Works, are unalterably, eternally Good in themselves. Of good Works, our Apostle tells us, that it was the great End of our Saviour's giving himself for us, *that he might free us from all Iniquity, and redeem us to himself a peculiar People; and a zealous People too: Zealous of what? Not only of some good Party, some good Doctrine, some good Article of*

Tit. 2. 14. Faith, but Zealous of good Works.

Of good Works, there are chiefly Two Sorts, that deserve to be the Objects of Zeal. Either such as are common to all Christians, and ought to be perform'd by

by all, in the general Course of a Christian Life ; by the general Obligation of our Christian Profession : Or else such as are not common to all, but proper to some Persons, and Callings, and Conditions of Men ; as are the peculiar Duties of Princes, Magistrates, Judges, Ministers, and the like, according to their several Stations in this World.

Here then will be found the great Difference : This is the great Touchstone of Zeal. Certainly all Men truly Zealous, will most industriously endeavour to perform the First Kind of good Works always ; those I mean, that are incumbent on all Christians. And they will as piously apply themselves to the Second Kind of good Works, if any of them come to be their own just Duties ; but not else. They will always strive to be good, devout, just, bountiful, merciful Christians : But they will never think it to be a Part of Religion, to rush into the Office of Princes, or Magistrates, or Judges, or Ministers, or to undertake any of them ; nay, they will think it their Duty to forbear them, unless they be their own lawful Offices, lawful by the Laws of God and Man.

Where-

Whereas Irregular Zeal, is in nothing more Irregular than in this. Does it not too commonly hurry private Men beyond their own Business and Callings, and make them unseasonably, unjustly, to invade the Business and Callings of other Men? In studying to be Quiet, and to do their own Business, in purifying their own Hearts, in amending their own Lives, in subduing their own Lusts, how few Zealots of all Parties employ their Zeal? How hot, how forward, how restless, are they in exclaiming against Publick Sins, in crying aloud for the Punishment of National Wickedness? How much does some Men's Zeal converse Abroad, and without Doors? How little at Home, and within? How many does it urge and inflame, rather to do Justice on some Sins, than to forbear all Sin? How many rather to be Correctors, than Practisers of Religion?

Of this Kind of Pragmatical Zeal, when private Men usurp an Authority that belongs not to them; in Shew of punishing Sinners, and asserting the Cause of the Church, and vindicating the Glory of God, there was a terrible Instance amongst the *Jews*: So terrible, that after it, one might well have hoped

ped there would have been no more like it. Though it be very commonly known, yet I cannot but mention it, at this Time especially ; because it did equal, if not, exceed, all the Modern Transports of enraged Zeal : Indeed, it seems to have been the fatal Original of them all.

For on a Pretence of imitating some extraordinary Cases in the Old Testament ; when some Men were sometimes immediately commissioned from God, or from *Moses*, to do extraordinary Actions of Zeal ; there rose amongst the *Jews*, a *Sect*, that called themselves *Zealots* ; a Sect, most Cruel and Bloody ; pretending to be impower'd by a secret Impulse from Above, to be the extraordinary Instruments of God's Judgments ; for the Administration of which, God Himself had then otherwise provided in an ordinary Course : But under that Disguise, they committed all manner of Riots, and Rapines, and Murders : By their mad Defence of their own Temple, they destroyed it ; by their intestine Confusions and Divisions, they contributed almost as much as their Enemies Arms to the enslaving of their Country : And it is apparent, that, next to the Divine Vengeance on that People

N ple

ple for the Death of our Saviour, the *Zeal* of that Sect was one of the principal Causes of the Ruin of their City and Nation.

From which dreadful Example, what are we instructed? Certainly, that the *Zeal* of private Men has no manner of Allowance from God, to take Pattern from extraordinary Cases to exceed the ordinary Duties of Christianity; or to divert any of them out of their usual Channel: That no Holy Passion, no Illumination, no Inspiration, can now be a sufficient Commission to warrant those Attempts, which contradict the common Rules of Peace, Justice, Obedience and Charity: That nothing can ever authorize such Attempts, but only a Divine, Immediate, Miraculous Call from Heaven, and that confirmed by Miraculous Works too; which it is a great Question, whether there be any such at all in these Ages of the World; or rather, I think, no Question but that there is none such at all: That the executive Part of *Zeal* belongs only to Publick Justice, not to any private Men; whatever Shew they may make of a stricter Communion with God, or a more distinguishing and separate Way of Holiness: Which, the more remarkable

ably distinguishing and separating it is, the more we always ought to suspect that it is Hypocritical. In short, that although God does sometimes make use of furious *Zeal*, as one of, his greatest Scourges on a Sinful People; yet, to our Comfort, at last it always ends in the Destruction of the *Zealots* themselves. Sometimes whole Nations may perish by the *Zeal* of a few; sometimes the Nation may escape, but the *Zealots* never.

I intreat your Patience, whilst I mention another Example, recorded in the Scripture, of another manner of *Zeal*, perform'd by our Saviour Himself, when, with irresistible Majesty and Authority, he removed the Exchange, and drove the Mercat out of the Temple. From which excellent Pattern, what may we learn? What should any Christian Practise like it? What not? By our Saviour's doing that Act of Piety, with such eminent Signs of Love for the Beauty and Purity of God's Worship; with such Divine Indignation against those that prophaned it; and with an Extasie so different from the Mildness of his ordinary Behaviour; that his Disciples did upon the very Place remember, and apply to him that of

Pfal. 69. the *Psalms*, which was prophesied of him so long before, *The Zeal of thy House has eaten me up*: By this certainly we are taught, that if ever a Christian *Zeal* may be lawfully transported beyond its usual Bounds, it should be for the purifying of the House of God; First, for the Reality, then for the Comeliness of Religion; never for destroying it by Sacrilege, or defiling it by Rudeness or Indecence.

But of this Practice of our Saviour, what should every Man not follow? Must every Christian of whatever ordinary Condition take on him, as Christ Himself here did, to vindicate in Publick the Glory of God, and his Church, when he thinks his Cause is neglected, or his Worship unreformed? I say not so. Every Man is not obliged, no Man is on his own Call, or his own Imagination of a Call from God, to have Recourse to open Force, even in the most Righteous Cause. The doing so, makes his Part in it to be most unrighteous: The doing so, will make him most unlike our Saviour's Example, and most disobedient to his Precepts, whom he makes the greatest Shew to imitate and obey.

How

How far then may any private Christian go to express his *Zealous Affection*, for the Reformation of God's Worship? Thus far without Question. Whatever Opposition he can make to Sacrilege and Impiety, by his Wishes, his Studies, his Prayers to God: Whatever Disgrace he can put on such Sins in his own Sphere: Whatever Amendment he can make in those, that commit them by serious Intreaties, or seasonable Reproofs, or just Complaints to both their Superiors; but chiefly, by his own Practise of a more uniform, orderly, and devout Piety. All this he may, he should perform: And if this were done as it ought, it would, perhaps, be a sufficient Task for the best, the most *Zealous* private Christians in the World.

But the rest is intrusted from God, and therefore ought to be left by Men, by the best Men, by the greatest Saints, to the Lawful, Publick Authority in Church and State; in whom that Zeal becomes a Sovereign Virtue, which, if unduly practised by private Men, were Rashness, or Presumption, or worse. Especially it is a most Christian Grace, when it is seasonably exercised by Christian Princes: Those Powers, that are

of God, for the Benefit of Men ; and over Men, for the Honour of God : One of whose most Sacred Obligations, one of their highest Prerogatives, one of their greatest Praises it is, to be the Maintainers and Cherishers of a Regular Devotion, a Reverend Worship, a true, a decent Piety ; which, when ever it loses its Decence, will soon after lose its Reverence, and its Truth. But as long as Religion is protected by the Supreme Power, in its Decence, as well as Truth, so long it will make an abundant Return for the Protection it receives ; it will be an invincible Support to the Supreme Power it self.

Thus far we have considered one Corruption of Religious Zeal, that, which transgresses in unbridled Excess : And some of the most effectual Cures for its Distempers, have been proposed out of the Word of God : Which, you perceive, instead of a blind Zeal, only approves a Zeal according to Knowledge ; instead of a wicked Zeal, a Zeal for good Things ; instead of the *Jewish Zealots*, recommends to us the most Gracious Example of the great Founder of Christianity.

These

These are some, though I cannot say all, nor the greatest Part, of the most common Diseases, and necessary Remedies of Excessive Zeal. For that when it gets loose, and grows intemperate, is wont to violate so many, almost all, not only Spiritual Graces, but even Moral Virtues and Dictates of Nature; that the Medicines for it being to be fetch'd from so many, not only Spiritual Graces, but even Moral Precepts, and Natural Laws, it is impossible to bring them all within the Compass of a Sermon.

I now could most heartily wish, that I had nothing to say on the other Side: That there were not another Extreme of Zeal still left behind untouch'd: Which offends as much in the Defect, as the other does in the Excess. But it must be confessed, that Irreligion, Indifference, Carelessness in Religion, are as much short of true Zeal; as unruly Passion, and furious Contention in Spiritual Things, does exceed the true Bounds of a sober Zeal.

A Caution, that is most carefully to be regarded by all Christians, and chiefly by us of this Age. For it is generally found by sad Experience, that both these Extremes of Zeal; the Excess,

the Defect ; are wont either to meet together in the same Times and Places, or immediately to succeed one another, and often in the Minds of the very same Men. Alas ! too seldom, in Religious Matters, do Men strive to correct any one Error of Belief, or Practice, with the moderate Truth, or Practice : Too often they oppose it with another Error, as bad, or worse. Does not Looseness of Life, and a Want of necessary Sobriety in some Men, too frequently drive others into Rigours, that are unnecessary ? Does not the fresh, and present Abhorrence of inordinate Zeal, and its Effects, too often incline too many to think the worse of all Religion ?

What then remains to be most seriously wish'd for, and advised ? But that we studiously provide against both these Dangers alike ? Alike against the Fury of Zeal, and against the Scandal of Prophaness ; but not by the Assistance of either of them against the other ? That we try to suppress all Licentiousness of Life, and Manners, not by Enthusiasm, not by Superstition, but by a sober, unaffected, reasonable, that is, by a true Christian Piety.

We

We have felt, and still do fear, the sad Influence of a fiery, fierce Religion, on all Sides of us: Here, from an enthusiastical, private Spirit; there, from a pretended Catholick Spirit; but private too. Yet God forbid, that either of these Disgraces of Religion should be alledged as an Excuse, or made an Argument, of carrying any Man too far on the contrary, to professed Irreligion. We have heard, and known, the Name of Holiness abused to the most destructive Designs: Yet God forbid, that the Thing it self should be therefore destroy'd, on a Pretence of its own Vindication. We, of all Nations under Heaven, have just Reason to abhor all falsely-inspired Principles of Godliness: But God forbid, we should oppose them with ungodly, atheistical Practises; which will in Truth rather strengthen the other, and give them more Authority. Our Church, and State, have been often well nigh oppress'd by the violent Effects of a deluding Spirit, and Religious Hypocrisy. And how is that to be prevented for the future? Certainly, not by open Impiety: In which there is no Disguise, no Hypocrisy; though perhaps 'twere better, and more Modest,

if

if there were. But these, and all other such Spiritual Delusions, are best, are only to be reformed by the Genuine Fruits of a sincere Religion, a conformable Devotion, and the well-temper'd Zeal of the True Christian Spirit.

Of all the Principles, of Humane Actions, Conscience and Zeal are the most Powerful. Even the false Zeal is a stronger Principle of Acting, and Suffering, than any other but the True: Unquestionably the True Zeal is the strongest of all other, far beyond all Bodily Strength, or Natural Courage, or Exactness of Discipline, or even Honour it self.

Wherefore, seeing we are to contend against the Violence of false Zeal, and the Obstinacy of seduced Conscience in so many several Shapes; may we furnish our selves with that Defence, that Assistance, which only is more powerful than those are. With True Conscience, may our Affections be most firmly united towards the Government: With True Zeal, may our Hearts be most ardently inflamed to our Religion. Let us once be truly zealous towards God, and we shall soon infallibly be united within our selves. For True Zeal, in Religion, is of all Things
the

the best Means of Union : It is, of all Things, the most irresistible Enemy, the surest Friend.

Too long has this most Heavenly Grace, this Beauty of Holiness, this Bright, this Noon-Day Glory of all Virtue, this Spirit, this Life of the Life of True Religion ; for so all Zeal should be, so all True Zeal is : Too long has this been captivated in our Enemies Tents, of both Parties ; too long by them has it been counterfeited by the Jesuits, by the Schismaticks ; too long by them have the false Shews and Images of it been employed, for the most mischievous Ends ; for the Confusion of Consciences, of Churches, of Kingdoms ; for the Subversion of Religion, of Governors, of Government ; for Ends, too Horrid to be here, or any where, particularly mentioned.

At length, let us of this Church ; the best Church in the Christian World ; and it would be the most flourishing Church too, if all the Members of it had a Zeal for it, proportionable to its Goodness : At length, let us rowze up our selves to rescue this captivated Zeal, to restore it to its own just Liberty ; to its own True, truly Christian, truly Primitive Christian Works.

From

From all such Antichristian Raptures of Zeal; which we too often hear of in these Last, and Worst, Ages of the World; let us withdraw our Thoughts, and lift up our Minds to the Imitation of the most Christian Examples of it; as of our Saviour Himself, so of his Apostles, and Disciples, in the First, and therefore the best Ages.

When God first touched their Hearts with this Coal from the Altar; first kindled this Holy Fire of Zeal in their Breasts; what was the Sign of it? Not a dark, smothering, hot, offensive, uncomfortable Smoke, but a pure, clear, propitious Flame. What were the Effects of that Flame? How were they Zealous? How within themselves? Not only in unmoveable Faith towards God; but in *Shewing their Faith by their Works.*

Jam. 2. 18. How were they Zealous for the Church

Phil. 3. 6. of God? *Not concerning Zeal, persecuting the Church;* not in making little Differences between particular Churches; not in striving for a groundless Dominion of one Church over all the rest: But for the Welfare, and Happiness, of the whole Catholick Church of Christ. How were they Zealous for the Glory of God? Not by Violence, or Malice, or Re-venge,

venge, against any ; not even against their Oppressors : But only by their own Labours, and Prayers, and Patience, and Magnanimity in Suffering. How were they Zealous in Respect to their Temporal Governours ? Not to resist *for Con-* Rom. 13.
science sake ; but rather *to be subject*, for 5.
that very Reason : Not by open Rebellion, not by private Machinations ; but in Blessing, and Serving, and Submitting to their Emperors, though they were Idolaters ; and obeying them in all Things, except their Idolatry.

And can any Man possibly doubt, but the same meek, humble, and peaceable Zeal, is enough for the most perfect Christians of this Age ; which was sufficient for the Primitive Christians ? Whom to imitate, is our Duty ; but for us to think to excel them, were the greatest Presumption. Can it be imagin'd, but the same Zeal with which they so earnestly press'd the Duty of Obedience to Princes, who were mortal Enemies to the Faith ; the same we ought to shew for the Faith it self, and the True Defenders of it ? Can it be reasonably questioned, but the same Way which they took to begin the Gospel, and to found the Church of Christ, is still the best Way to continue it, where it
is

is begun, and to make it flourish where it is establish'd?

So therefore are we to temper, so to employ our Zeal as they did theirs: To temper it, I can never repeat this too often; to temper it, with Innocence, and Benignity, and Charity; to employ it against Sin, and Disobedience, and Schism; in unfeigned Piety towards God, in unshaken Duty to his Vicegerent, in hearty Obedience to his Church.

Most surely, these are good Things, the best Things in this World, and the next. Wherefore it is good for us, to be always zealously affected towards them. And if we be so, we need not fear, but God Almighty will still preserve them, and prosper us in their Preservation: Which God of his infinite Mercies grant. *Amen.*

12 JY 62

F I N I S

A
SERMON

Preached before the

Lord Mayor,

AND THE

Court of Aldermen,

AT

GUILDHALL Chappel,

January 29. 168¹₂.

By THOMAS SPRAT, D.D.
Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

LONDON,
Printed for Charles Brome, 1710.

SERMON

Preached before the

Lord Mayor

AND THE

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JOHN HALL, Esq.

January 22. 1881.

By THOMAS STUART, D.D.
Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

LONDON

Printed for Charles Brown, 1710.

To the Right Honourable

Sir John Moore, Kt.

LORD MAYOR of
the City of LONDON:

And to the Right Worshipful the
ALDERMEN, his Brethren.

MY LORD,

THO' the Favour of your Commands is
an abundant Excuse for my Printing
this very plain Sermon; yet, I doubt, I
need some Apology for Preaching it in such
an Auditory, as I had the Honour that
Day to serve. I fear it might seem a Pre-
sumption for me to Discourse on this Sub-
ject, in the Presence of the Reverend
Judges of the Land, the Learned Ser-
jeants of the Law, and the Wise Gover-
nors of your Great and Honourable
City: An Assembly of Men, from whose
Wisdom and Experience such as I might bet-
ter learn the Doctrine, and Practice of
Righteousness and Mercy.

I can only say, that as it was my Duty, so it was my Endeavour, to treat of this Argument meerly as a Divine. I design'd not to persuade you to these Virtues by the Principles of Humane Prudence, which such a Congregation could not be suppos'd to want; but rather to confirm you in them by the Obligations and Promises of our Holy Religion, which is the proper Business of my Profession.

It was therefore enough for me in that Place, on that Text, to perform the Part, not so much of a Teacher, as of a Remembrancer; And I have attain'd my End, if I have laid before you some of the chief Praises, and Rewards, that the Scriptures bestow on these Two Excellent Graces: Whereof you, that heard me, are so much more able to give Rule, and, what is much better, Example to the World.

MY LORD,

I am Your Lordships

most Humble, and

most Obedient Servant,

Tho. Sprat.

A
S E R M O N

Preached before the
Lord Mayor, &c.

PROV. XXI. Ver. 21.

He that followeth after Righteousness and Mercy, findeth Life, Righteousness, and Honour.

IN these Words, there are Two most eminent Virtues recommended to us: One the most useful, the other the most amiable, of all that we can acquire towards our Being, or Well-being, in this Life, or the next: Righteousness, the best of all Natural Virtues: Nay, it

is a Christian Grace : Mercy, the most excellent of all Christian Graces.

These Two are here represented to our earnest Pursuit, not in the severe Style of a strict Command, nor in the rigid Terms of a legal Precept. Tho' if God had only thus required them of us, they had deserved our most dutiful Obedience, considering the High Prerogative the Almighty Law-giver has over us. But here they are set off to us in the Style of the Gospel, in the gentle, alluring, and delightful Form of a *Promise*. That, which is *our necessary Duty*, is attended with a *free, ample, immense Reward*.

The *Duty* is double, *The following after Righteousness; The following after Mercy*. The *Reward* is treble, *Life, Righteousness, and Honour* : According to the usual Method of God's gracious Dealings with Men. *His Promises* always go beyond *our Performances*; *His Rewards*, both in Weight and Number, by far exceed *our Duties*.

Of these Studies of *Righteousness and Mercy*, we should all be Followers, as we are Men; we all profess our selves to be Followers, as we are Christians. What then can be a more proper Work for us all, in this our solemn Meeting,
either

either as *Men*, or as *Christians*, than to reason with our selves concerning this whole Matter, to convince our Judgments of the Necessity of these Duties, to excite our Affections towards them, by the Greatness of their Reward?

To this Purpose, be pleased that I examine,

First, What are the Two Things which are here proposed to our zealous Prosecution?

Secondly, What is the Way, the best Way, of following after them?

Thirdly, Let us encourage one another in their Attainment, by the Largeness of the Recompence, which is here assured to us from the Mouth of Divine Wisdom it self.

My Text, you see, consisting of a twofold Duty, and a threefold Reward, the Duty comes first to be considered in both its Parts; *Righteousness*, and *Mercy*. Both which, *Solomon*, the wise King, has here most wisely put together, and in their Order. For wherever they both are, *Righteousness* is the Foundation of *Mercy*; *Mercy* is the Ornament of *Righteousness*. And

Eclef. 7.
16.

neither of them can be compleat without the other. Whatever is not just, can never be merciful : Whatever is meerly, strictly just, without any Compassion, it is to a Proverb highly injurious : It is that which the Scripture calls, a being *righteous over-much*.

The Word Righteousness, has several different Significations in the Old, and the New Testament. In the Old, it sometimes passes for all manner of Goodness, frequently for the particular Virtue of Justice. In the New, it commonly signifies the same ; and besides, it is often raised to a higher Meaning, to express the glorious Mystery of our Justification by Christ, and the Spiritual Grace which attends it.

I believe, my Text is most to be understood of that kind of Righteousness, by which is meant, Integrity of Actions, and Honesty of Conversation, in all our publick and private Relations in this World. And so I shall chiefly handle it. Though, indeed, the other more Divine Interpretation of the Word ought not wholly to be excluded in our present Meditations. For to all I shall say on this Argument, it must be premised, that without the Righteousness of Christ, to consecrate all our

our own Righteousness and Mercy, and to make them acceptable to God, it were a vain Presumption for any Man to think he can deserve by them, upon their own Account, either *Honour*, or *Righteousness*, or *Life* it self.

But first, I begin with *Righteousness*, as it is taken in the usual *Sense* of the Old Testament : For common Justice, and moral Honesty, and Obedience to good Laws.

In explaining the Nature of this Virtue, it would be no very Modest Undertaking, for me to make a large Discourse before this venerable Assembly ; where I speak to those, whose Business it is, not only to instruct, but to regulate and steer the whole Nation in the Practice of it. Only for our clearer Proceeding, something must be said concerning it.

I humbly conceive, a Thing, or Person, may be called Right, or Righteous, or Just, either by Reason it is so originally, and independently in its own Being ; or because it is conformable to some certain Rule of a superior Being ; by comparison to whose Perfection, the moral Straightness or Crookedness of all inferior Things ought to be judg'd.

Now nothing can be absolutely righteous, and primitively just, but only God himself ; who is the sole Author of all Truth and Justice, the only Donor of it to us. His infinite Understanding is the only Cause, and Measure of all Truth. His unerring Will is the only Fountain, and unalterable Standard of all Righteousness.

As therefore this Will of God is display'd in several Manifestations to Mankind ; so, according to the Resemblance of our Wills and Actions to his Will thus manifested, there may and ought to be various Kinds of Righteousness amongst Men.

As the Will of God expresses it self to our own Hearts, in the Dictates of rectify'd Nature, and right Reason ; so an Observance of that Will is natural and moral Righteousness. As the Will of God is declared in his written Word ; so a Submission to that Will is religious Righteousness. As the Will of God appears in the Images, and Representatives of God's Power on Earth ; so an Obedience to their Laws is Political, nay, it is Religious Righteousness too, as far as those Laws do not transgress the higher Principles of God's Natural, Moral, or Divine Laws.

This

This seems to be the Nature of Righteousness in general. And this three-fold Declaration of God's Will, either written in our own Hearts, or spoken in his Word, or pronounced in the Voice of Lawful Authority, is the most certain, if not the only Foundation of that Distinction between Right and Wrong, Equity and Injury, by which all Mankind is to be directed in all Conditions, either as Superiors, Equals, or Inferiors.

And now that this most commendable Virtue may not pass among any of us, as it has with too many in our Days, only for an Old Testament Duty, rather belonging to a moral Man, than to a Christian: Give me Leave to put you in Mind, how essential it is to Christianity it self; what Commendations and Privileges the Holy Scripture ascribes to it; what high Rank and Dignity it holds in God's Statute-Book, as well as in Mens; and that not only in the Law, but in the Gospel; and not only spiritual Righteousness, but natural and political Righteousness too.

If we shall reflect on the whole Progress, and all the Revolutions of God's Dispensations to Mankind, we may easily

fily observe, he has always proceeded with us, not only according to the unaccountable Purposes of his own secret Will, whose Judgments are unsearchable, and its Ways past finding out : But he has dealt with us, as after the Manner of a God, by his infinite Mercy ; so, as I may say, after the Manner of Men too, by a standing, plain, declared, written Rule of Justice and Righteousness ; by Truth of Contract, by Covenant, a double Covenant, in which we might know what is his, what ours by his Gift : A Covenant, in which we might understand our Work, and, if we perform it well, may claim our Recompence.

Thus the great Creator of Heaven and Earth, who has an unlimited Dominion and Sovereignty over the Works of his Hands, is yet so much delighted to have Mankind govern'd by known Laws, that he himself was pleased, if I may so speak with Reverence, to bound and circumscribe that Part of his own Omnipotence by the like Method.

And in the first, most publick Appearance of God's Presence to the World, as soon as he had chosen to himself a peculiar People, when he began to establish a settled Religion, did not then his Care
of

of common Justice, and civil Rights, keep an equal Pace with his Provision for his own Worship? Were his first Laws to the *Jews*, Ceremonial and Ritual only, relating to his own Service alone? Were they not Judicial and Moral also, respecting as well the Peace and Prosperity of Humane Society? Of all which Laws, did not God himself seem to give the Advantage to this latter Kind? He did, in this at least, that his own Ceremonial Law, which he then prescrib'd, was sometimes to be abolish'd, but his Moral Law never.

For upon his Second more perfect, and last Revelation of Religion in the Gospel, the Way of his own Divine Service was indeed much alter'd, but not any one common Rule of Humane Justice: No Abrogation of any one Precept of Righteousness, or Honesty, followed upon the great Reformation from Judaism to Christianity, but rather a new Addition of more Strength and Authority to them all.

Whoever shall recollect the whole Matter and Design of our Blessed Saviour's Preaching, can he possibly think otherwise? Does not the *whole Sum of his Divine Doctrine*, seem well nigh calculated, and fitted as much to establish,
and

and direct the *Courts of Legislators*, and the *Seats of Justice*, as for the *Temple*, and the *Pulpit*? Were not all his *Sermons*, especially his great *Sermon on the Mount*, a perfect *Comment on the ancient Precepts of Righteousness and Mercy*? Does he not there free them all, one by one, from *gross Corruptions*? Does he not vindicate them all by most genuine *Interpretations*? Does he not establish them all by severer *Punishments*, and more glorious *Rewards*? Especially, did he not exemplify them all by his own most innocent, just, unblameable, and merciful *Life*?

Thus confirm'd, thus advanc'd, did our Blessed Saviour deliver down the common *Rules of Right and Justice*; and thus the same *Rules* have continu'd unchangeable in all *Successions of the Christian Church*; never hindring the Great *Design of Christianity*, but exceedingly promoting it, and being themselves incorporated into it: So that all along the same do, as you would be done to, the same *Definitions of Reason and Righteousness*; the same general *Precepts of Honesty in Commerce, and Judicial Proceedings*; the same *Laws of Ruling and Obeying*, have been common to *Christians with the wisest Heathen Nations*: Or, where-
ever

ever there was any Difference, the *Christian Laws* of this Kind were the strict-
er, and the Practice of them too a-
mongst *Christians* for many Ages was, as
their *Principles* require it ever to be, far
more exact.

Whatever our New Saints, that are
only so of their own making, have de-
vised, was it ever so much as questio-
ned amongst the Apostles and primi-
tive Saints, whether the *New Law of the*
Gospel, though that be styled in Scrip-
ture, *The Royal Law of Liberty*; whether
that did infranchise, and set any Man
loose from the Precepts of Internal Vir-
tue and Goodness, or of External Sub-
mission to Civil Government, and Inter-
nal too? A Question indeed there was
concerning the *Ceremonial Law*, *Whether*
that were to be extinguisb'd? And that
carried in the *Affirmative*. A Question
there was also concerning the *Moral*
Law, and *Legal Righteousness*, *Whether*
that alone could justifie a Christian? And
that determin'd in the *Negative*. But
never did any sober Christian doubt,
Whether the Moral Law did oblige under the
Gospel or no.

Certainly, till after a *Thousand Years*,
the *Romish Tyranny* prevailed over weak
Princes, and blind People; never did any
Church

Church of Christ, or pretended Head of any, take to it self a Prerogative to Exempt the Christian Church from due Obedience to the Temporal Power; much less to set up a Spiritual Power above the Temporal, nay, with a pretended Right to advance or depose the Temporal. Certainly never, till the Anabaptistical Madness, and Enthusiastical Phrensies of these last Ages, did any Members of the Church of Christ presume upon an Extraordinary Purity and Holiness of their own, to declare themselves absolved, by a Spiritual Light within them, from the Eternal Bonds of Reason, Right, and Justice, to which we are all indispensably oblig'd, not only as we are Men, but much more as we are Christians.

And to manifest the just Judgment of God against *them all for these Usurpations*, is it not very observable, *That the very same Men, who most of all Men that call themselves Christians, have invaded the Rights of Publick Government, and Private Virtue, the Romanists on the one Side, the Enthusiasts on the other; the very same Men have made the greatest Invasions on Religion it self, the one on its Purity, the other on its Unity?*

Those

Those of the Church of *Rome*, Pope *Hildebrand*, and his Followers, who assum'd a Dominion and Supremacy over all Temporal Laws, did not they first exalt themselves in the Temple of God, above all that is called God, above the Scripture it self, the express Law of God? The Anabaptists in *Germany*, and their Successors, of whatever Name or Sect, who first falsely boasted, that their inward *Sanctity* and Inspirations did set them above the low *Rudiments*, and *Beggery Elements* of this World, as they miscall'd the Obligations of Virtue and Obedience: Did the same Men rest satisfied there? Did they not at the same Time profess, *That all Sober Piety, and Decent Worship, and intelligible Religion, was as Gross, and Carnal, and Antichristian, and as Grievous to their Spirits, as they had pronounced all the Ordinances of Civil Government, and Moral Virtue to be?*

But, God be praised! neither of these *Abominable Examples* is of sufficient *Authority*, or *Antiquity*, to make a Precedent, against the constant, universal Practice of the whole uncorrupt Christian, as well as Jewish Institution. Still therefore the same Observation holds good, that Justice and Piety, Righteousness and Religion, came into the
World

World together. In their Beginning they were brought forth as Twins, the most beloved Children of the most high, the most likely Off-spring of Heaven. And as they were *Contemporaries* at first, so they have been all along educated together; both cherished alike by God himself, both observed alike by all wise, holy, and good Men.

Nor indeed could it well be otherwise. For the mutual Agreement between Justice and Piety, is inseparable: The perpetual Union of Righteousness and Religion is most necessary. The Principles on which they both subsist, the Ends which they would both produce, are the same, or subordinate one to the other. Are not true Reason, and the Word of God, some of the chief Principles of true Righteousness? So they are of true Religion. Are not the Glory of God, and the Happiness of Mankind, the Ends of Religion? So they are of Righteousness. Religion, indeed, does carry the blessed Work much farther; undertakes to finish it in another Life. But Righteousness begins it in this Life, and performs its Part so well, that without it, Religion it self could have little or no real
In.

Influence on the Consciences of its Disciples.

Was not Mankind a Society, as soon as it was a Church? And Righteousness contributed to make it a Society, as Religion did to make it a Church. Was it not Righteousness that first made Men begin to confide in one another? To commit their private Safety and Profit to each others Fidelity? That therefore was the common Parent of all other Virtues: That first peopled the World: That first drew and enticed Men into Houses, and Cities, and then secured them there; and so divided Mankind from Beasts in Conditions, as well as Habitations. Certainly, it was Righteousness, as a Part of natural Religion, that first made Men to be Men: And so prepared, and then deliver'd them over to reveal'd Religion, and at last to be made Christians, and Saints.

If Righteousness had not temper'd, and softened, and reconciled humane Nature within it self; no Creature had been more fierce, and Salvage, than the Sons of Adam; none would have had more vehement Passions to desire Mischief; none more Cunning to contrive it; none greater Power to effect it.

If we take Righteousness out of the Heart of a Man, we leave nothing there of the Image of God, after which he was created. Take Righteousness out of a private Family, and it soon turns into a Den of Thieves. Take Righteousness out of a State, and that only becomes a more regular, more politick, more combin'd, and therefore a more pernicious Society of mighty Robbers. Take Righteousness out of the World, and the World would not deserve to be call'd, as it was at first, the compleat Work of God's Hands; but a Chaos still, or a rude Forest, or Wilderness; or something worse: For to be inhabited only by Rapine and Violence, is worse than to be only an innocent, unfrequented Desert.

Thus whatever Increase of Civil Arts, whatever flourishing of populous Nations, whatever Intercourse between People and People, has been practis'd, to supply the Necessities, Conveniences, and Ornaments of humane Life: They were all at first founded on Righteousness. From that, are derived to us all our Temporal Blessings: Without that, we could never have enjoyed the Means of our eternal Blessings. For where there is no true Righteousness, there can
be

be no true Humanity, no Civility, no Kindness of Men to one another ; and by Consequence, no true Religion. For all true Religion is always accompanied with some true Humanity : Wherever the Power of Christianity comes, it either finds some Civility, or makes it. What is that which immediately follows, *Glory to God on high, Peace on Earth, good Will towards Men.* And where there is no Righteousness, there can be no good Will ; where there is no good Will of Men to one another, there can be no Place, or no well-grounded Hope of God's good Will to Men.

This is the first Thing in my Text, *Righteousness* ; a Virtue so beneficial, so necessary to Mankind ; so highly valued of God himself. This deals with Men, as Men, upon the Square, upon even Terms ; justly expecting a like Return of good Offices. The next is *Mercy* : But that has more of Superiority and Majesty in it. That takes Men on the greatest Disadvantage, with the greatest Generosity : When they are either miserable by Distresses, or obnoxious by Injuries, relieves the one, pardons the other. Whatever therefore I have said, or can be said, in Praise

of Righteousness ; still the chief Place in our Praises, and Practice, ought to be reserv'd for *Mercy*. Great, indeed, is the Extent of both these together. All below Righteousness, is Sin : Nothing is above *Mercy*. So that both together comprehend the whole Compass of Mens Duty to one another, from the lowest to the highest Part of it ; which may be all contain'd in two Words, *Honesty*, and *Charity* ; that is, the *Righteousness* and *Mercy* in my Text.

S. James
2. 13.

Thus they are best together. But if consider'd asunder, or compared, then *Mercy* must triumph over, and rejoice against *Judgment*. *Righteousness* is a Virtue unblameable : *Mercy* is a Grace most Lovely and Honourable. *Righteousness* obliges us to yield to other Men their own : *Mercy* inclines us to give them our own too. And what can be more ? *Righteousness* makes you not to be Enemies to others unjustly : *Mercy* makes you not to be Enemies to your Enemies, nay, to be their Friends, their Benefactors, even their Gods.

Most

Most certainly, as *he shall have Judg- S. James*
ment without Mercy, that hath shewed no 2. 13.

Mercy: So God will requite Mercy with the greatest Mercy; for *He will requite even Righteousness with Mercy.* Of all the Divine Attributes, God is delighted to exercise his Mercy to Men more than any, nay, than all the rest: And therefore he cannot but esteem Mercy in Men, above all other Humane Endowments. So Essential, so Dear, is Mercy to God himself, that in his own inexpressible Divine Nature, he seems to give it some special Pre-eminence over all his other Perfections: Tho', no doubt, they are in themselves all equally Divine and Infinite.

For the Sake of his Mercy, God seems willing to change his own Eternal Mind, which is undoubtedly immutable. It is said, *He repented accord- Psal. 106.*
ing to the Multitude of his Mercies. When 45.

he enjoins it us, he prefers it before his own Worship: He says, *I will have S. Mat.*
Mercy, and not sacrifice. His Mercy 9. 13.

may be said to sweeten his Holiness, to moderate his Power, to delay, to stop his Revenge, to enlarge, beyond all Proportion, his Distributive, and, after all Provocations, to restrain his Vindicative Justice. His Mercy God often

employs, without any the least Mixture of his severe Attributes : But he seldom or never exercises any of them in this World, so as utterly, irreparably, to exclude his Mercy : *In the midst of Judgments, he remembers Mercy.*

The *Two Great Attributes*, by which God condescends to govern all Humane Affairs, are his Power, or his Mercy. But an Almighty Power alone had been rather Dreadful, than Auspicious to Mankind. It might have fill'd Mens Minds with Fear, and Terror, and have frighted them into a Servile Compliance. 'Tis only Mercy added to Power, that brings Authority with it, and charms Mens Hearts into a Willing Obedience.

Which of these Two God Himself prefers, can we have a clearer Instance, than in *the Persons and Administrations of Moses*, and our Blessed Saviour? *Moses the Vicegerent of God's Power*, our Saviour of his Mercy: *Moses the Servant of God*, our Saviour the *Son of God*, nay, *God himself.*

During the *Ministry of Moses*, we read much of *Countries laid waste*, of *Nations plagued*, of *the First-born cut off*; of *Kingdoms and Armies overwhelm'd and destroy'd*. Then Religion seem'd rather inclin'd

to

to terrifie the World, than to pardon it ;
to inforce a Law, than to perswade it ;
to subdue Enemies, than to make Friends.
But at the Appearance of our Blessed Sa-
viour, Religion seem'd on a sudden recon-
ciled to the whole World, and not only to
require by its Divinity, but to deserve by
its Clemency, the Love and Reverence of all
Mankind. For in our Saviour's Works,
though there were Undeniable Testimo-
nies of his Unlimited Power, yet there
were more of his boundless Mercy :
Though both in him were infinite, yet
his Mercy was most apparent.

Such is Mercy, so Wonderful, Adora-
ble, and Universal, in the First Great
Example, and most perfect Original of it,
God himself ! 'Tis well for us that it is
so. And such, in Truth, of Imitation,
should be the imperfect Copies that
we take of it from him. Tho' we can-
not come near that Mercy in any Mea-
sure of Equality ; yet we should all
strive to resemble it, if we would par-
take of it : *To be merciful, as our Heavenly* S. Luke
Father is merciful. As he is merciful ! 6. 36.

Yes. As his Mercy is over all his own
Works, and above all our Sins ; so should
our Mercy be, in our weak Degree of
Proportion, above all our own good
Works to other Men, above all other

Mens ill Works and Offences against us. This is the only Way, for us frail and sinful Creatures to be like our Heavenly Father, in that very Thing in which he is most our Father, most our Heavenly Father.

These then are the two great Duties here recommended, both the principal Things in Heaven and Earth. Nothing brings Heaven down so near to Earth: Nothing raises Earth so much toward Heaven. What then can be done better on Earth? What more worthy of Heaven, than to follow after them both? And what is it to follow after them, in a right Manner, in a true Scripture Sense? Which is my Second Head proposed.

We read it according to the Hebrew,
Odēs ēi- He that followeth after Righteousness and
καὶ ὁσ- Mercy. The Septuagint render it, The
μύνης, καὶ Way of Righteousness and Mercy, shall
ἐλθὲν κο- find, &c. Indeed, whoever would
συνὴς ἐν- rightly pursue these, or any other Gra-
ρήσει, ces, they must do it, in a Way, not
&c. by secret Shifts, and Turning; not in
By-path, or indirectly; not after any
private Fancy, or Spirit; but by a trod-
den, direct, lawful Rule: Let me say it,
in the King's High-way. Thus every
Man ought to be righteous to all Men,
equally,

equally, and indifferently, not only to his own Friends, or Sect, or Party. We may, 'tis true, be merciful to some Men more than to others, according to our Opportunities, or Obligations, or Discretion: But then, still we should be exceedingly careful, that we be not unmerciful to any Man.

Thus to *follow after* these Things, is to set about their Performance speedily, zealously, indefatigably, with the whole Man, in all our Thoughts, Words, and Actions; especially the Men of this World, as Christian Men of this World, plainly, and sincerely to set your Minds, your Tongues, your Hands, your Feet, to the Work: With the clearest Conviction of your Understandings, that they ought to be practis'd; but chiefly with the most ardent, and unwearied Affections of your Hearts, in the Practice: For it is the Heart, it is Practice, that God most regards.

And to *follow after* both these Graces aright, is to practise them both in their Seasons and Proportions: Never to divide two such Things, which God himself has so nearly join'd in his
Com-

Commands ; in his own incomprehensible Godhead, has indissolubly united them: So we to conjoin, and mingle them both together ; never to omit either of them, on a Pretence that it is for the Sake of the other ; but with the most charitable and harmonious Mixture of both in one, to season, to strengthen, to justify all our Mercy with Righteousness ; to qualify, to allay, to sweeten all our Righteousness with Mercy.

And thus really *to follow after* both these Things, in Scripture-Language, is really to obtain them. So gracious and benign are the Expressions of the Holy Ghost in these Matters, that your unfeigned Labour, and well-directed Industry, in the Ways of Grace and Goodness, brings with it an infallible Success : Your very Endeavours after them, if uncounterfeit and persevering, are often here taken for the Effect it self. So gently, so compassionately, does our good and only wise God condescend to meet our Infirmities, that his Grace does often prevent our Diligence ; never fails it, never comes short of it.

Let

Let us but knock, and the Gate of Di- S. Mat.
vine Mercy shall be open'd to us: Let us 7. 7.
but seek, and we shall find: Let us but ask,
and we shall have: Let us but follow
after, and we shall overtake. Nay, far-
ther yet, God will not only give
us the very Things we ask, and
seek, and follow after; but he of-
ten super-adds the Recompence of them
at the same Time: Oftentimes accom-
panies, and sets off his Graces, not on-
ly with their own peculiar Gifts, and
Advantages; but accumulates more,
heaps upon them many other remote
Blessings.

Of which most bounteous Method
of God's Dispensations to Mankind,
Solomon, the wise Author of this Sen-
tence in my Text, of all Men living
in his Time, had the greatest Expe-
rience. For when God entirely left
it to his Will, which he would choose,
either Wisdom, or Wealth, or Power,
or Victory; and he had made the
best Choice in preferring Wisdom;
God did not only plentifully bestow
that upon him, but over and above
cast in all the other good Things,
which, in Comparison to Wisdom,
he himself had rejected. God said to
him,

1 Kings 3. 11, 12, 13, 14. him, Because thou hast asked for thy self this Thing, and hast not asked for thy self long Life, neither hast asked Riches for thy self, nor hast asked the Life of thine Enemies, but hast asked for thy self Understanding to discern Judgment; behold, I have done according to thy Words: Lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding Heart, so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also, says God, given thee that which thou hast not asked, both Riches and Honour. And if thou wilt walk in my Ways, and keep my Statutes, and my Commandments, then I will also lengthen thy Days.

So that Solomon, of all Men, was the fittest Man to continue his own Observation of God's infinite Goodness in this kind, upon sacred Record to all Generations. And therefore, as God had proved to him, concerning Wisdom and Understanding, so he pronounces here of Righteousness and Mercy, without which the highest Understanding is Craft, not Prudence; the greatest seeming Wisdom is Subtilty, and Artifice, not Wisdom.

Of *Righteousness and Mercy*, he affirms in my Text, not only that he, who follows, after them, shall find *Righteousness and Mercy* themselves: Tho' that were much; much more than any other Study can boast of, that all our Search shall never be in vain: But here, that is suppos'd as out of all Question: Much more is said; not only, that he who follows after *Righteousness and Mercy*, shall find, but findeth; What? Not only *Righteousness, and Mercy*, but moreover *Life, Righteousness, and Honour*. You shall not only possess these Virtues, if you sincerely pursue them, but you shall enjoy so surely, that you may be said already to enjoy the happy Fruits of that Pursuit, which are *Life, Righteousness, and Honour*.

That is my Third and Last Particular,

The Rewards, ensuing the Right following after these Duties; which, you see, are far more than equal to the Duties themselves. But what if these Virtues had come single, and alone, without any such blessed Train of Promises, or bright Attendance of Rewards? How ought we

we to have been affected towards them even then?

Out of all Controversy, we ought still to have followed after them most earnestly, to have embraced them most willingly, for their own Sakes, for their own true Worth, and unvaluable Beauty. Nor need we to fetch Arguments from the Christian Principles, to perswade us to this. Thus much even the wise and good Men amongst the *Gentiles* have taught us. They scarce thought any Philosophy worthy of a Man, that did not oblige him to love *Justice and Bounty*, and all other Virtues, for themselves, for their inward Benefit, and invisible Excellence.

And if *the very Heathens* could have such just Apprehensions of Things, under their obscure and imperfect Light; What Shame would it be to us *Christians*, if we should not far exceed them? What Reproach, if we should scarce equal them? What hainous Scandal, if we would come short of them, in our Opinions, and Practice of these Things? If we should think Virtue of it self to be less praise-worthy than they did, or less its own Reward?

Yet

Yet since our most gracious Master, our most indulgent Father, has thought fit to add so much to these self-sufficient Duties : We may thankfully accept of those Promises ; we may lawfully look to that Recompence of Reward, that Recompence, which we could not deserve. And we ought therefore to double our Industry, which is so doubly, so manifoldly requited ; most diligently to follow after *Righteousness and Mercy* ; since they are Things in themselves so desirable, so advantageous, so inestimable in their Rewards.

First, Of Life, and Honour.

As I said before of the Word *Righteousness*, so I must now say of the Words, *Life, and Honour* : They have different Meanings in the Old and New Testament. Under the Law, *Life, and Honour*, and most other legal Promises, were, I do not say only, but commonly, understood in a literal Sense ; for *Temporal Prosperity, and Secular Happiness*.

But

But the Gospel, as it has rais'd the Things themselves much higher, so it proportionably advanc'd the Words. And therefore in the Gospel, though Temporal Felicity be not at all obstructed, but rather exceedingly promoted by it; yet *Life*, and *Honour*, and most other Evangelical Promises, are most frequently to be taken in a more Sublime, and Divine Sense; for Life Immortal, Honours unspeakable, Joys full of Glory.

I cannot now in Justice, but apply this Promise to my present Subject, in its full Extent, in both its Senses: For most surely, *Righteousness and Mercy* are able to entitle you all to both these *Lives*, to both these *Honours*, both here, and hereafter.

The first Kind of *Life, and Honour*, which is *Peace of Days, Increase of Dignity, and Reputation in this World*: All those Blessings these Virtues may claim, as their Due and Right; as their own by Purchase and Desert, though not from God, yet from all Mankind. And in Fact, they are seldom disposs'd of them, but by great Injury, or extraordinary Misfortune, or, to
speak

Speak in the Christian Language, by some hidden Purpose of Divine Providence.

Nor is this only the Prerogative of *Righteousness and Mercy*. But though this may at first seem a Paradox, yet it is a Privilege common to all other Virtues; that as they have great and just Expectations of a future Recompence, so they are usually accompanied with some very considerable Temporal Good, and Advantage. And it is the unavoidable, insupportable Misery of all Vice, that as its Prospect into another World is most dismal, so its Condition in this is ever, some Way or other, very uncomfortable.

Whatever flattering and deceitful Shapes Sin may put on, yet it can never so dissemble all its Defects, so hide all its Deformities, but still when we come to our selves, when the Charm is over, we may see, and must confess, that all Wickedness is followed close by some very great, notorious, Temporal Punishment, and Disadvantage. Some bring Loss of Credit, Contempt, Infamy, Hatred: As Dishonesty, Cruelty, Corruption, Oppression, inordinate Ambition; which

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very commonly fails of that vain Honour it unduly grasps at, and loses that quiet Life, of which before it was calmly possess'd. Some bring Loss of Health, Decay of Bodily Strength, and Pleasure, which they only seem to consult : As Luxury, and Riot, bring Sickness and Diseases ; they make Men most unfit for Death, and yet most hasten it. Some bring Loss of Earthly Riches, as Prodigality and Intemperance ; which Poverty pursues as an armed Man : So that Men often lose their Hopes of another World, not so much as for the good Things of this World, but even by throwing away their Share in this World too. Nay, Covetousness does the same : By a Greediness of getting more, it deprives it self of the true Ends of Getting ; it loses the Use and Enjoyment of what it had got.

Thus every Vice has its dark Shadow, some Evil Genius haunting it in this World : Its Satisfactions are short, and uncertain ; its Calamities most certain, most durable. Whilst on the other Side, every Virtue has its good Angel, is surrounded with some visible Lustre, some Worldly Advantage. Some bring Health, some Wealth,
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some Power, some Fame, some Contentment ; a Good, at least equal to any of the other : But *Righteousness and Mercy* united, bring them all together. You see they freely offer to your Possession, they will plentifully shower into your Bosoms all the Sweetness and Tranquility of Life, all the Splendor and Abundance of a Life that is honourable.

All this they are here enabled to do by the Gift of a Divine Promise : This in Truth, for the most part, they cannot but do, by natural Effect, and Consequence. For towards a secure and happy Life, Righteousness does very much : Mercy perfects what the other leaves undone. Righteousness makes few or no Foes, none worth making Friends : Mercy makes, or deserves to make, all Friends, even of Foes. Righteousness always commends you to good Men, and often defends you against wicked Men ; never justly provokes wicked Men against you : Mercy moves, melts, reconciles, conquers even the Wicked ; by the most powerful kind of Victory, *overcomes Evil with Good.* Rom. 12. 21.

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What then, in all humane Probability, may be reasonably expected from such inoffensive Justice, such charming, such diffusive Benignity, and Compassion? What? But the Justice, nay more, the Thanks, the good Will, and good Offices of those, who shall be righted by your Justice? What? But the Prayers, the Hearts, the Lives, if need be, of those who shall be preserv'd by your Mercy, or forgiven by your Pity? All this from without: Besides the comfortable Assurance, and Testimony of a clear and serene Conscience within; which only is able to make Life sweet, Honour not a Burden: Nay, it is able to make undeserv'd Disgrace a Comfort, and Death it self happy.

And certainly all this is Life, and Honour; this is Praise, and Glory: If there be any true Life, above a sensual, carnal Life: If there be any substantial, lasting Honour, above the perishing Shadows of it: If there be not only any Religion towards God, but if there be any Thing true, and just, and honest, and lovely, and of good Report: If there be any Virtue, any Praise amongst Men: If that be Glory, which the very Heathens have deserv'd

fin'd to be the concurring Esteem, and Commendation of the Wise, and the the Good, bestow'd on great Men, not only, nor indeed chiefly, for their Riches, or Power, but rather for their Clemency and Beneficence; Perfections most proper to the upper Part of Mankind. And they can never do Mischief to the lower Part, nay, they can never be employ'd, but in doing Good to the lower Part of the World, God himself has said, that *Great Men are Gods*: Yet it is not Greatness alone, but Mercy joyn'd with Greatness, and strengthen'd with Righteousness, that can make them so.

Yet because it may so happen, by the secret Disposal of the all-wise Governour of all Things, that *Righteousness and Mercy* may sometimes fail of a Temporal Reward: Because that may come to pass, which yet *David* professes never to have seen from his Youth to his old Age, *That the righteous Man may be forsaken, and his Seed beg their Bread*, or want an easy Subsistence of Life: Nay, because the merciful Man may come short of his just Recompence of Honour here below; Therefore there is still behind, a sufficient

ficient Reserve, an unmeasurable Compensation, in the other more Heavenly Sense of the Words, *Life*, and *Honour*: Which, as sure as God is true will be, are the undoubted Portion of the Righteous, and merciful Man.

That *Life*, that *Honour*, *which Eye has not seen, nor Ear heard*, nor hath it enter'd into the Tongue of Man to express, or Heart to conceive, that is the most worthy Subject of all our Thoughts, that ought to be the chief End of all our Designs. Else our Designs may be speciously honourable; they may be for *Life* in a low Sense, rather indeed for *Livelihood*, than *Life*; only to support a *Life*, that is but for a Moment supportable: But they can never else promote our true *Life*; they can never else be truly profitable, much less truly honourable.

Our Gracious God indeed permits, nay, he encourages you all, in the Prosecution of the *Life*, and *Honours* of this World. His Laws have very many Precepts of true Humility, but no levelling Principles in them, no more than yours have. Distinctions of Dignity, different Advantages of *Life*, Degrees of Honour, do very well agree

agree with the greatest Purity, Strictness, and Simplicity of the Gospel : No doubt therefore they must be consistent with the Freeness, and Largeness, and Generosity of Christianity.

God suffers Mankind to be provok'd, and excited to Virtue, by all Manner of Arguments, by Secular, as well as by Spiritual Promises ; by Temporal, as well as by Eternal Hopes. He allows you all the sober Pursuit of the moderate Delights and Plenty of this Life : They are his Gift, if you obtain them. He is, no doubt, well pleas'd with your earnest Endeavours after Excellency, in any kind of wise Counsel, or useful Knowledge, or worthy Action. The Honours you reap thereby, he confers upon you : Of the good you do thereby, you your selves have the principal Advantage.

Give me Leave therefore to add ; All these our other Designs should so be proportioned, that being good in themselves, they be not made ill by their Abuse, or Excess : All our Thoughts of this World's *Life*, and *Honours*, should be so order'd, as neither to depress our Minds too much by the Cares of this *Life*, nor to raise them too high by the *Honours*

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of this World : Rather they should be employ'd, to assist our Souls, and give them Wings, in rising higher to supernatural Expectations ; to a *Life*, to *Honour*, immortal ; to carry up our Contemplations, to fix our Affections on Heaven, on that Prospect above, which is the last Bound of the very Eyes of our Bodies ; How much more ought it to be the last Object of the Eyes of our Minds ?

And if that *Life*, that *Honour*, shall be at the Bottom of all your Hearts, shall be the Beginning, and End of all your Pains and Studies, if by *Righteousness and Mercy* you shall aspire towards them, you cannot come short of them. This Way you shall find as near, and as sure a Passage to Heaven, from the midst of your Earthly Business, and Worldly Employments, conscientiously and piously, righteously and mercifully managed, as any other Man has Reason to expect from the greatest Retirement of a solitary Devotion.

I speak this on good Authority. For thus the Holy Scripture it self dispenses the Joys of Heaven. In the whole Course of the Gospel, Eternal Glory is as much, at least as much,
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ensured to the just and charitable Virtues and Graces of an active Life, and of a publick Station in this World, as to any other Part of all Contemplative or Practical Religion.

Whatever Imaginations some Men may have, concerning the true Way, and Gate, that leads to Celestial Happiness : Which Men have been always too ready to open to themselves, and to those of their own Parties and Opinions ; too quick in shutting it up on all others : Too many usurping an Authority of brandishing the Terrors of Gods Justice, and of scattering the Assurances of his Mercy, when and where they please ; which were neither of them ever committed to their Distribution. Yet whatever Claim such Men may make to the Joys of Heaven: Some pretending to them only by the free Grace, without regarding the Precepts of the Gospel : Some only by relying on single Faith, and vilifying of Charity : Some by great Scruples in little Things, and far less Care of great Things : Some by censuring of other Mens Lives, and putting as many as they can, under a State of Damnation ; by being more against other Mens Religions, than for their own :

own : Yet, undoubtedly none of these is the Way. These are all mistaken, unrighteous, unmerciful Ways. The only true Way to Heaven, which God himself has traced out, which Christ himself does often point at, though it be narrow, yet it is a direct, not a cross Way : Though it be strait, yet it is passable, and has a Gate always open. And what is this Way ? What this Gate ? It is not a disputing, contentious, comparing, censorious, but a mild, peaceable, righteous, merciful Way. And this it is ; By the Mercy of God the Father, *Christ made to us Righteousness* : And that Mercy and this Righteousness, made effectual to us Men by the Assistance, and Consolations of God the Holy Ghost ; and that received by Men with a lively, efficacious Faith ; and that evidenc'd to be in Men by such Effects, as most resemble their Divine Original, such as respect both God and Man : Which are true *Righteousness and Mercy* of Men to one another, accompanied with unfeigned Piety towards God.

Is there still behind in my Text any more Reward promised to the Man, who follows after *Righteousness, and Mercy* ? Indeed, can there be any more
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than mortal Life, and Honour? Life, and Honour immortal? Yes, there is still more: And it is that, you see, which is the Cause of all the other Rewards. It is Righteousness it self. *He that followeth after Righteousness and Mercy, findeth Life, Righteousness, and Honour:* Which now, if you please, may be thus briefly paraphras'd. He that lives righteously and mercifully towards Men, if he shall practice these Virtues humbly, and constantly; if he shall perform them so, as not at all to rely on their Merit for Salvation; if still he shall find the Want, and believe the Efficacy, and lay hold on the Benefit of our dear Redeemer's more precious Righteousness: He shall then partake of the Fruits, and enjoy the Happiness, that is promised indeed to our *Righteousness and Mercy*, but was purchas'd only by our Saviour's Righteousness, and bestow'd only by God's Mercy.

I am now arriv'd at the other more Evangelical Signification of the Word *Righteousness*. But I come to it so late, that I cannot treat of it at large. And it is better to say nothing of it, than too little. Only from this, and the rest of my Discourse, I beg Leave to present

sent you farther with one short Observation ; which perhaps will not be unseasonable, by me to be mentioned with all Submission, by you to be received with favourable Interpretation.

You may perceive, that the true Doctrine and Practice of *Righteousness and Mercy*, of Mens *Righteousness*, and *Mercy* to one another ; of God's *Righteousness*, and *Mercy* to Men, had the same Divine Author and Example at first, the same Course and Progress afterwards : And they are all along in Scripture represented under the same, or very like Expressions. *Righteousness*, and *Mercy*, are the Sum of the Law in one Sense ; they are the Substance of the Gospel in another. The only possible Means and Instrument, to secure and preserve the one of these, is Civil Government : The only Way to teach and maintain the other, is Religion.

What now may be fairly concluded from all this ? Certainly, that as these two most admirable Things have themselves so long, so well agreed in Matter, in Words, in Growth, and Increase ; as they are both the best Things in this World ; so the Means and Instruments of preserving them both, are both most nearly united in Interest, and ought

ought to be so in mutual Affections, and Assistance.

Certainly, when God himself chose his first Law-giver, and his first High-Priest, out of the same Family ; when he appointed *Moses* and *Aaron*, two Brethren of the same House, to be his principal Ministers of Justice, and Piety : It was not by Chance, it was not for Want of Choice. But there was even then some mystical Intention, and that was even then a happy Presage, that between the true Righteousness, and the true Religion, there should, in all succeeding Ages, be nourish'd a perpetual League and Alliance, Offensive and Defensive ; that, as God himself expresses it, *Aaron might be to Moses instead of a Mouth, Moses to Aaron instead of God.*

And is there not still the same Reason for the same entire Union between both these Things among us, as there was then among God's own People ? Have they not both the same Strengths and Dangers, the same Hopes and Fears, the same Friends and Enemies, the same Friends in Heaven and Earth, the same Enemies in Earth and Hell ?

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The common Adversaries of both may begin against Religion, as, God knows, in most of our Memories, they did. But did not then, and will not always, the Ruin of Righteousness suddenly follow the Overthrow of Religion? In all, or most of the seditious Practices, Tumults, and Confusions among us, the false Cause of God has been first pretended, the true Cause of God first struck at: And next to that immediately a false Justice has been made a Colour to supplant the true Justice: The Church has been always attempted first to be removed, that they might come at the State the more easily.

Can there be then a more powerful Argument to unite us all in preventing the like Mischiefs, than our common Danger? Can there be a better Guide to admonish us all how to prevent them, than our common Experience?

I profess, I speak this, not only as a necessary Caution for the Time to come, but as well in just Acknowledgment of what is past. For as we have Reason to thank the Enemies of our Religion, on all Sides, when they upbraid us, as they often do, that

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ours is a meer State Religion, because the Interest of our Church has been always, ever since its Reformation, inseparable from that of the Civil Government: Which we freely grant, and must always assert, as that by which we shall stand, or fall; nay, by which, through the Blessing of God, we shall always stand: So we must declare to all the World, that next to the Scripture it self, and the genuine Interpretation of it by the Ancient Christian Writers, and the uninterrupted Use of the best and purest Ages of Christianity; next these, the great Establishment, and Strength of the Church of *England*, is the Protection of the Crown, and the Stability of our Civil Government, and Laws. And thus far we confess, ours is a State Religion: Our Church was reform'd by Authority of the State: And above all its Enemies, it best provides for the Security of the State.

Wherefore in the Name of God, as the best Way to frustrate all our Enemies Hopes against our Church and State, which will be the most solid Answer to all their little Objections; let us all unanimously persevere, in our several Stations, to pray for, and

and obey, to strengthen and defend one of the most moderate, the wisest, the most pious Frames of Religion, that ever Christians enjoy'd since the Primitive Age ; one of the best, the freest, the most happy Constitutions of Civil Government, that ever Mankind enjoy'd since the Creation. May we all agree in this undeniable Truth, that whoever would subvert the State, they are mortal Enemies to Religion : Whoever would destroy Religion, they are equally Enemies to the State. To both,

Rom. 13.
5. let us *be subject, not only for Wrath, but for Conscience sake,* because so very little or no Wrath, so much of Justice and Mercy, is to be found in them both.

May therefore *Justice and Piety, Mercy and Truth, meet together, that Glory may dwell in our Land: May Righteousness, and Peace, always kiss each other among us.* May the Counsels, and Persons, that advance, and protect both in this Nation, be inviolably united in *Righteousness, and Mercy: May they for ever prosper with Life, and Honour.* A M E N.

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F I N I S.

A
SERMON
Preached before the
Artillery Company
OF
LONDON,
AT
St. *MARY-LE-BOW*,
April 20. 1682.

By *THOMAS SPRAT*, D.D.
Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

LONDON,
Printed for *Charles Brome*, 1710.



To the Honourable
 Sir *William Prichard*, Kt. and Alderman,
 President of the *Artillery Company*.

Sir *James Smith*, Kt. and Alderman,
 Vice-President.

To the Right Worshipful
 Sir *Matthew Andrews*, Treasurer.

As also to the Right Honourable
 Earl of *Thanet*, | Lord *Allington*,
 Lord *Lumley*, | Lord *Paston*:

To the Right Worshipful, and Worshipful,
 Sir *John Narborough*, | *John Shales* Esq;
 Philip *Frowd* Esq; | Maj. *Rich^d. Burdon*,

STEWARDS.

And to the whole Court of Assistants,
 Field-Officers, Captains, and Gentle-
 men, Professing and Exercising Arms
 in that Renowned and Honourable
 Society.

Right Honourable,
 [IN obedience to your Commands, I have
 published this Honest, and Loyal Dis-
 course; which is all I can say to its Ad-
 vantage, except what was an unexpected
 Com-

Commendation to it, that the Enemies of our Church and State have thought fit to dislike it; and to shew they did so, have had Recourse to their old Arts of Lying and Slandering. But it is no matter what they say, or do; whilst you continue like your selves, to think the Practice of Loyalty not only a Part of your Profession as Soldiers, but of your Religion as Christians.

As to the main Doctrine here delivered, there is not any one true Son of the Church of England, but will consent to it: Nor any of its Adversaries, that can oppose it without renouncing the common Principles of Christian Government. As for the manner of handling it, I have Reason to ask your Pardon, but not theirs: That I have not managed it as so noble an Argument deserves, I beg your Excuse. That I have not treated of it with Bitterness or Virulency; I believe, even they will confess, when they shall read it: And let them consider, what Moderation and Temper a Man had need be of, that in this Nation, and this Age, shall speak against Faction and Rebellion, without extraordinary Severity.

Right Honourable, &c.

April 29.
1682.

I am your most Humble,
and most Obedient Servant,

THOMAS SPRAT.

A
S E R M O N

Preached before the

Artillery Company

O F
L O N D O N,

A T

St. *MARY-LE-BOW*,

April 20. 1682.

St. LUKE XXII. Part of Ver. 36.

*—He that hath no Sword, let him
sell his Garment, and buy one.*

W H E N in such Warlike Solemnities, as yours of this Day, Men of my Profession are admitted to the Honour of bearing any Part; I suppose it is not expected, that

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we should cloy, and vex your Ears with the Terms of your own Art; or affect impertinently to entertain you with Discourses on the Heroick Science of Arms. *The Weapons of our Warfare are not Carnal, but Spiritual*, 2 Cor. 10. 4. And if it was justly esteemed once a very indecent Presumption in a Philosopher, to read a Lecture of Battels before one great Commander; how much more improper would it be for a Divine, to undertake to teach the Art of War in the Presence of so many.

But when you call us hither to serve you in these your Annual Triumphs, I know you do it with a Pious Design; that as all Wars of old were usually begun with a Publick Sacrifice, so these your Exercises of War should first be consecrated by Devotion; that here in the House of God you should first receive the Churches Prayers and Benedictions on those Weapons, which Abroad you are so ready to employ in the Churches Defence: That of those Arms, of which you have elsewhere learnt the Skilful, and the Glorious Practice, here you might consider the Saving, and the Religious Use: How a meer natural Courage may be so improved by Piety, as to become a most Christian

istian Grace : How Victory may be not only made lawful, and barely innocent ; but how it may be sanctified : And sanctified, not first by Rebellion, then by Sacrilege, but by Fighting only in a truly Good and Righteous Cause ; and by defending it, not with Hypocritical Zeal, and Zealous Cruelty ; not only with Valour and Conduct, but with Fidelity, Loyalty, Justice, Equity, and Charity. How this may be done, it being, I humbly conceive, my proper Business here to deliberate ; whilst I endeavour to do it, I must intreat the Favour, not only of your common Patience, but of your more than ordinary Pardon : If, besides my many other Infirmities, that, which ought to have been an Advantage, shall prove my Disadvantage : If even this great Appearance, so beautifully-terrible, *as an Army with Banners*, which guards this Place, and secures all within it, and round about it, particularly us of the Clergy, shall yet happen somewhat to discompose me, so that I shall not be able to bring a Firmness of Mind equal to the Greatness of the Occasion.

However, for my Encouragement, I have brought with me our blessed Lord, the great Captain of our Salvation, speaking to you with Power: And in the Words of my Text, pronouncing that which at first hearing, seems a most surprizing Doctrine for the Prince of Peace to deliver: That sometimes the Habiliments of War are more necessary, more becoming a Christian, than the very Robes of Peace: That in some Seasons of imminent Danger, those of his Disciples, who had not Swords, were obliged to sell, if Need were, their very Garments to buy them.

Such is the literal Sense of the Words. But was not this a strange Precept for that King to injoin, *Whose Kingdom was not of this World?* Joh. 18. 36. How could this be consistent with that Meekness in Persecutions, that Long-suffering of Injuries, that very Love of Enemies, with which his whole Gospel abounds? How was this conformable to his mild Example, *who went as a Sheep to the Slaughter, and as a Lamb that is dumb?* Acts 8. 32. Who though he might have summoned *more than twelve Legions of Angels*, Mat. 26. 53. to his immediate Rescue, yet never employ'd them as a Triumphant Host, but as an Harmo-
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nious Choir, to sing *Peace on Earth, Good-will towards Men*, Luke 2. 14. How comes he, just then as he was going to be betrayed by one of his own Disciples into the Hands of his most cruel Enemies, against whom he design'd nothing less than Opposition; how comes he then to talk of furnishing most his Attendants with Instruments of War, and of preferring Swords before Garments? Then especially, when presently after, as soon as he was seiz'd on by the High Priest's Officers, he severely rebuked the great Apostle *St. Peter* for but once using the Sword: *Put up thy Sword*, says he, *into its Place. He that taketh the Sword, shall perish by the Sword*, Mat. 26. 52.

It is true, these Two remarkable Sentences of our blessed Saviour, that to *St. Peter*, and this in my Text, may seem at first View capable of contrary Interpretations. But if we shall examine the Circumstances, and Occasions of their Delivery, we shall soon find that they do not only very well agree with each other, but both together may teach us the whole Christian Doctrine of War; what Use of Secular Arms the Gospel permits, what it condemns.

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First, St. Peter's Case was this: He with an unseasonable Passion, proceeding from his own intemperate Zeal, without any Call from his Superiors, had wounded the High Priest's Servant whilst he was performing, 'tis true, a most unjust Action, but was commission'd to do it by publick Authority. Him therefore his Master censures for striking with the Sword, without a sufficient Warrant. That he blames, as an illegal Attempt of a private Man against a publick Officer.

Put up thy Sword, says he, O Peter. Submit with Patience. Oppose not Authority. Do not thou break the Laws of thy Country, though for Kindness and Love of me. *Put up thy Sword*. He that uses the Sword unlawfully, though on a Pretence never so Pious, *shall perish by the Sword*: Shall either be destroyed by it here, or punished hereafter by God Himself, for having so used it.

Wherefore we are to conclude, that our blessed Lord, by this Check given to St. Peter, did absolutely prohibit all manner of using the Sword among Christians; but only that he taught us the great Duty of Christian Submission. For if St. Peter was, then certainly all other Christian Subjects are, forbidden to unsheath
their

their Sword against their lawful Sovereign, or his Ministers, as they are commissioned by him, though they do it on a Pretext so Spiritual, as the Cause of Christ Himself. And of all that call themselves Christians, methinks the pretended Successors of *St. Peter* might hence have been warned, not to grasp at an Universal Power of the Sword, or to usurp a Temporal Sovereignty over the World, on any Shadow of Right derived from *St. Peter*: Since he was so far from having any such Power, so unsuitable to his Apostleship, that of all the Apostles, *St. Peter* only was left to himself, to give an Opportunity, by his publick Reproof, for confirming the quite contrary Doctrine.

Now in my Text, our blessed Lord prepares his Disciples with extraordinary Courage to overcome those Dangers they had hitherto been freed from: But after he should leave them, they were presently to encounter. In the Verse foregoing he appeals to them, whether they had wanted any Thing in his Service, though formerly he had sent them forth without Purses, or Scribes, or Shoes; without having taken any common Care before-hand for their Subsistence: And they acknowledging they had

had lacked nothing, He proceeds here to advise them, That for the future, whoever had Purfes or Srips, they should not neglect them ; whoever had not Swords, they should provide them.

Erasmus in a juſt Indignation, that the Grammatical Senſe of theſe Words ſhould be ſo wreſted by ſome Interpreters as to juſtify the groundleſs Quarrels, and cruel Wars, between the Chriſtian Princes of his Time, will allow my Text to have only a Myſtical Meaning, and interprets it thus : He that has no Sword of the Goſpel, or of the Word of God, let him by all Means procure it.

*Calvin,
Grotius,
Dr. Hammond,
&c.*

But the general Voice of the beſt Interpreters agree, That our Lord, by putting his Followers in mind of furniſhing themſelves with Purfes, Srips, and Swords, does, as by ſo many Symbols and Signs, repreſent to them, that now ſhortly far worſe Times of Perils and Perſecutions attended them ; and therefore they ought to be more cautious and watchful, more careful to be ſupplied with all inward and outward juſt Aſſiſtances ; as all Men are wont to make a greater Proviſion of Purfes, Srips, and Swords, when they perceive ſome great and imminent Dangers approaching.

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My Text therefore being apparently a Figurative Expression, whereby our Lord commands all his Followers to arm their Minds against the Spiritual Conflicts and Temporal Afflictions they were to meet with, I beg the Liberty only to use the Figure no farther than *St. Austin* does, who cites this very Place against those Hereticks, that condemned all the Use of Secular Arms as unlawful : So I crave Leave from this Symbol of buying Swords, to infer thus much ; that although spiritual Arms are a Christian's proper Weapons in Times of Danger, yet even the natural Means of just defence are allowed to Christians, as well as to other Men.

*Contra
Manich.
Lib. 22.*

A Doctrine, which the severest of our Blessed Lord's Precepts do not in the least overthrow. For although it is certain, that by such Commands as that, *Unto him, that smiteth thee on the one Cheek, offer also the other*, Luke 6. 29. we are positively required to bear all tolerable Injuries with Mildness and Self-denial : Yet no Casuist is so severe in expounding that and the like Scriptures, but they universally grant, that when private Mens Lives are in Jeopardy, and much more when the publick Life of the State is in Danger, the free Use of all the honest Means

Means of Personal or Political Safety, was never prohibited by our blessed Saviour.

Now then, from this Figure of a Sword, I take occasion to propose this great Truth to be the Subject of my present Discourse. That notwithstanding the most Evangelical Precepts, of Meekness, Patience, Forgiving, Blessing, and Praying for Enemies, still the warlike Furniture, and Use of just Arms, is in all Ages of Christianity lawful, is in some Seasons, some Exigences of Times, a Duty more incumbent than the very Arts of Peace; that Christians, as well as other Men, may furnish themselves with Swords, not to act the least private Injury, but to defend themselves, as much as may be, against all; and especially may use their Swords, when lawfully called, against publick Injury; in assisting the Civil State of which they are Members; in *fighting the Lord's Battels*; and then they fight the Lord's Battels, when they fight for the Cause of their Temporal Princes.

Of this Doctrine, when I shall have briefly dispatched the general Theory, I will then, God willing, if your Attention shall hold out, try to reduce it to the particular Practice, and magnanimous Design of this great Assembly, by representing

sending to you, That if ever there was any Time, or Country, or Society of Men, to which our pure and peaceable Religion it self has more than ordinarily recommended the pious Use of the Sword, or the due Preparations for using it, this is the Time, this the Country, this the Society, you having Laws and Liberties to defend, not against your Prince, to whom, or to his Progenitors, you owe them ; but against the same Parties of your Fellow Subjects, who once already usurped them ; you having such a Church and Faith to contend for, against Foreign Usurpations, Domestick Separations, and Combinations of Separation ; you having such a Faith's-Defender to serve with your Purse, your Scurps, your Swords, your Lives.

As to the first Thing propounded ; I shall not spend Time in proving this universal Truth, that all defensive, or offensive Means of Safety, which amongst all Men are righteous, are equally so to Christians, as to any other Part of Mankind. It will be enough in this Matter to say, That all the Instruments of a just Defence, or Offence, are by the Christian Law as much allowed to be used, as by the Natural Law they are taught to be provided.

And

Cicero pro
Milone.

And that, says the Heathen Orator, is a Law not given to us, but born with us, to which we were not educated, but made ; which we took not from Reading, or Institution, but from the very Principles of our Beings : That whenever our Lives are in Danger, from the Treachery of Robbers, or Rage of Enemies, then *Omnis honesta esset, ratio expediendæ salutis* ; Then, says he, all Ways of securing our selves are honest, and even honourable ; for so the Word *Honestum* does usually signify.

I must not go so far as *Tully* does ; I cannot say with him, that all Ways of defending our Lives from Danger are honest, much less are they honourable. But this I will say, that all lawful Ways in such Cases, are not only truly honourable, but truly Christian ; and I will use no other Proof of it than what he alleges, That this is most agreeable to the true Law of Nature.

For, let none be mistaken, the Doctrine of Christ, in its highest Dispensations of Grace, in its severest Rules of Mortification, did never design to abolish the original Dictates of right Reason, or of sincere Nature ; but rather to correct the Irregularities of Reason misguided, and to reform the Depravations of Nature

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corrupted. Of right Reason and Nature, all the Light and Rules were written by the Finger of God on the Hearts of Men ; of the Gospel, all the Truths and Precepts were written by the Holy Spirit of God in his revealed Word. The Hand indeed, and the Character of the one, is much clearer, and more legible, than the other. But since the same God was the Author of both, they cannot in the least contradict each other.

For its Part, so far is the Gospel from doing so, so far from destroying the common Principles of Humanity towards our Being, or Well-being in this World, that it more strongly confirms and advances them all by the higher Commands of Christianity. So far it is from extinguishing the harmless Desire of Self-preservation, that of all Institutions in the World, it proposes the best Means to effect it.

Wherefore, that is a Thing rather to be taken for granted than proved, That the Use of the Sword, for publick or private Defence, is lawful among Christians : A self-evident Truth, denied by none but by some wild Sects of Enthusiasts. And indeed, it were to be wish'd, that all those who are of that Opinion, would in Practice stick to it, since it may be observed

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of them, That they are never against the Use of the Sword, but when they are not Masters of it.

Thus far then your Duty is plain before you. The Profession of Arms is not in the least contradictory to the Christian Profession in general. But still there is some Difficulty behind, how the forcible drawing of the Sword can be consistent with those severe and mortifying Graces, to which above all other Religions, indeed, well-nigh contrary to all other, Christianity alone obliges all its Disciples? How Warlike Enterprizes can stand with Meekness? How an undaunted Heart with Self-denial? How a daring Spirit with Patience? How Conquest with Love of Enemies?

What shall we say in this Question? Will it suffice to affirm, That Christ our great Law-giver has divided the Parts of his Discipline? Has distributed to several Men their several Portions of it, according to their distinct Conditions in this World? That only from such as you, the governing and active Part of Mankind, He requires Valour, a high Mind, and a brave Spirit? And that only from such as us, the lower and the obeying Part, he expects Mildness, Gentleness, Patience? That cannot be: For although to several
Stations

Stations and Relations of Men in this World, our blessed Lord has assigned their peculiar Duties; yet to no particular Rank or Order of Men did he ever confine any one of all his general Precepts.

Wherefore, there must be some other Way for all these Virtues, that seem so extremely distant, to meet and entirely agree in the same Breasts. To this End, you may be assured, that our Lord did never so injoin any one Christian Grace to all Christians, as utterly to exclude any other: He never obliged any of his Followers to be so meek, as to be without all Courage; nor so courageous, as to be void of all Meekness. But he has so wisely tempered, and graciously proportioned all his heavenly Gifts, that the stoutest Courage which he teaches, is always found to be the meekest; and the meekest Heart which he makes so, is in the likeliest Way to be the most courageous.

Here then let us fix. If this be true, then instead of any Jealousie, that the strictest Laws of Christ will break a brave Mind, or debase a bold Heart to Cowardize; you ought rather hence to conclude, That only by his Laws, and the Hopes and Rewards which attend their

Performance, you can be taught a perfect Valour. And consider, I pray, how undeniable this will appear in the particular Instances.

It is true, our holy Faith most solemnly enjoyns Condescension, Long-suffering, Forbearance, Mercy ; and requires the more of all these in Men to one another, since it shews us there is so infinitely much of them in God towards Men. But now will any of these Virtues be a Hindrance to the true Fortitude ? Rather in the common Experience of the best and most generous Part of Mankind, as well as of Christians, is not the truest Fortitude always observed to be the most inoffensive, most accessible, hardest to be provoked, easiest to be intreated ?

It is confessed, the Law of Christ requires the most fearless Minds, nevertheless to fear God ; to fear him, so as to tremble at offending him ; so as to obey him ; and by such a Fear, helps us to enjoy him. But now, can there be any surer Means, than such a Fear, to raise your Minds above all unworthy Fear of Men, or worldly Dangers ? We know the Gospel commands us to fear Men too for God's Sake ; obliges the stoutest Minds as much as the gentlest, to pay an equally dutiful Submission to their lawful Superiors

riors. But does the strictest Obedience suppress the true Stoutness? Do not you find, that Exactness of Discipline increases it? Is it not brutish Ferity, rather than manly Boldness, which will not endure the easy Yoke of Conscientious Obedience?

It is granted, our Religion forbids all Men to invade each others Rights. That, says the fierce or the ambitious Man, would put a Stop to many a gallant and valorous Action. It would, indeed, to many a licentious and outrageous, but not to any worthy Enterprize. For, as in Peace nothing can be truly just, so in War nothing can be truly brave, where the sacred Distinction between Right and Wrong is not kept inviolable.

My Brethren, that Slowness and Backwardness of attempting upon others unjustly, that Fear of injuring others; for such a Fear, it is not your Shame, but your Praise to own; that Willingness to right others as well as your selves, which Christianity teaches all its Disciples, will certainly make a Soldier innocent in all his Quarrels; and the Consciousness of that Innocence, cannot but render his Mind more calm, serene, and even invincible, in all their Events. *Whence comes Wars and Fightings among you,* says the Apostle,

Apostle, *Come they not from your Lusts?* James 4. 1. It is true, Rapine and unjust Wars come from thence; and that Religion which most subdues your Lusts, will most remove the Occasions of such Wars. But at the same Time, and by the very same Way, it will more secure the Success, more increase the Renown, and more brighten the Lustre of all your just Arms.

Wherefore, so far is Christianity it self, so far those Doctrines it most tenderly cherishes as its own genuine Product; the Doctrines, I mean, of Humility, Patience, Kindness to the Afflicted, and Pardon of Offenders; so far is any of these from being opposite to the Principles of true Honour and Valour your Art professes: That whoever would conceive in his Mind the perfect Character of an excellent Warrior; so he ought to form his Image, to furnish him with all Kinds, but especially to adorn him with this kind of easy, mild, and gentle Virtues.

And if the very Heathens thought their Poetick Heroes could not be compleat, except they first received their Arms from their Gods; How much more ought a Christian Hero to fetch his from
Heaven?

Heaven? How devoutly ought he to put on the whole Armour of God, Eph 6.11. as St. Paul calls all the Graces of a Christian Life. How careful should he be, not only to abstain from the common Sins which Religion condemns, but to aspire to the highest Duties it commands! Not only not to be given to Luxury and Debauchery, not only not to owe his Valour to his Vices; but, amidst so many more Temptations, to keep his Eyes and Thoughts from being defiled, as well as his Hands from being Rapacious: Not only not to blaspheme Heaven, and defy his Maker, with horrid Oaths and Curses; but more humbly to reverence, more dutifully to depend on that God, to whom he more peculiarly appeals: To keep your Natural Lives more than ordinarily innocent, which are exposed to so many more than Natural Deaths: To have your Minds free from all sordid Passions, or Desires, far above the mean Appetites of Avarice, or Cruelty: To have true Glory only for your End: To use no inglorious Means in acquiring it: To have your Courages strengthen'd with Truth, Faith, Righteousness; sweeten'd, and graced with Brotherly Love, Pity, Compassion: Not to be Enemies to your very Enemies; but only to their Op-
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pressions, and Injustice ; to be Friends, Lovers, Imitators of their Virtues : Not only to be unconcern'd in Dangers, but patient in bad, mild in good Success, merciful in Victory.

These, my Brethren, Religion tells us are the chief Excellencies of a Christian. These, you know, are the principal Accomplishments of a Soldier. Of these, your Profession acknowledges the Necessity, and labours for what the School of Christ only teaches, the Perfection.

The Use and Honour of just Arms appearing thus consistent with the Sincerity, with the very Meekness of Christianity : Be pleas'd that we now go on to contemplate, in what special Opportunities, what conjunctures of Times, they may be most justly, and with truest Praise, employ'd.

First, without question, always justly the Sword may be drawn by private Men, to defend their Lives against private Assaults ; but not always, nor at any Time, for their private Revenge. Your personal Preservation from Injury, God has, in some Sort, committed to your selves, and to your own Swords, as well as to the Magistrates Care; but in no Sort, distinct from the Magistrate, has God intrusted to your selves the avenging of any personal Injuries. What

What a bold Invasion then on Authority ! What a rude violation of Publick Justice, is the too common ill Custom of Mens striving to right themselves by private Duels ! What is it indeed, but another kind of Rebellion against the Government, that every Man's Hand should be ready, to be lift up against every Man, on every imaginary Affront ! That the Shadows and Punctilio's of Honour should be so much more regarded, than the solid Substance of it ! That those Weapons, which nothing ought to command, but the sacred Cause of your God, and your King, Men shall oftner draw, for every Trifle, on every rash Word, against their Countrymen, their Neighbours, their best Friends sometimes ; against their King in his Subjects, against their God in his Laws.

A mistaken Way of Mens gaining to themselves a contemptible Reputation ; when either Passion, or Intemperance makes them not themselves. A Way of Honour, which the most victorious Nations of the ancient World seldom or never practis'd ; and which that very Nation of the modern World, that either first introduc'd, or most cherish'd it, is grown quite asham'd of. I beseech you, let not the *English* think that to be the

the greatest Bravery, which was never esteem'd Brave by the old *Romans*, whose National Greatness of Mind in other Things you so much resemble. Let not the *English* any longer allow that to be praise-worthy, which your next Neighbours on the Continent, your old Competitors in Arms, have quite forsaken, as dishonourable: And since they have done so, have remarkably flourish'd in the Field.

You cannot but know, that it has not been by particular Quarrels, or single Combats against the Will of the Prince, that the Profession of the Sword has been made so famous: I must say, had there been no other Use of it, it had soon been most infamous: A Skill fitter for divided *Barbarians*, than for Nations civiliz'd. The Virtue, the Loveliness of your Art, consists in the joint Force of it; that it can make whole Troops and Armies to have at once the Strength of a great Multitude, and the firm Union, and well combined Motion, as it were, of one Man.

There never was, nor ever will be, any Country, or Government, that got a lasting Fame or Empire by the unruly Passions, and unlawful Attempts of private Men. Most surely many States have been

been destroy'd by them, whilst those Kingdoms have been always most prosperous and renowned, when an orderly, well-disciplin'd Valour has been most encourag'd, and single Outrages most severely punish'd; where no Force has been thought honourable, but what is justify'd by Authority; and that Force is honourable in the Judgment of the Gospel it self.

Wherefore, Secondly, as by private Men for private Safety, though not for private Revenge, the Sword may be justly drawn; so much more by all in a publick Cause. And then not only for Safety, but also for Revenge: For Revenge too; since Vengeance belongs only to God, and to none besides himself; but to the publick Sword, has God reserved the Repaying of Vengeance.

For just Defence then, I say, and for just Offence too, the Sword ought to be used in a publick Cause. But let us remember, nothing can make it to be a publick Cause, but a lawful Authority. It can never be made so by every, or by any, private Spirit. It is most true Divinity, as well as Politicks, that none the most vehement Persuasions or Dissuasions of Conscience, none the greatest Pretextes to new Light, or Divine Inspirations,

tions, can justify any Member of a Christian State or Church, nor any whole Church, to violate the Establish'd Laws of their Country by resisting. Nay, there can be no surer Proof of an erroneous Conscience, of a Spirit that is not of God, than this, if it should provoke Men possess'd with it, under any Colour of the Cause of God, to arm against, and by open Force to oppose, the Powers that undoubtedly are of God.

'Tis true, of old, under the *Jewish* Dispensation, God himself thought fit sometimes, by an immediate Call, different from that of the Civil Government, to excite private Men to draw the Sword, and to perform Acts of Supreme Justice. Yet then he made them cease to be private Men any longer; first placed them in his own stead; shew'd certain Signs of his Presence with them; and often gave them the Power of Miracles, to confirm what they did. So that no Man now ought to imitate such extraordinary Examples, without being able to produce the like extraordinary Commission. And that is not now God's Method any longer. His reveal'd Law being now completely discover'd, God himself has seldom or never now Recourse to such Instances of his absolute Prerogative. And there-

therefore certainly no Man ought to usurp them at his Pleasure. To the Law, and to the Testimony, to his written Word he now refers us ; and, as that commands, *to Kings, and all that are in Authority* ; to whom alone he has committed the executive Part of his common Power, as to the Vicegerents upon Earth of his Justice and Mercy.

Thirdly, therefore, on a publick Call only, and only in a publick Cause, can justly publick Arms be taken up ; and so they may be even by Christians, for the Cause of God, and the King : Which though in Words they seem divided, yet in Reality they are one and the same, and inseparable ; as the same Sword of old was call'd, The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon, the Supreme Magistrate. This, my Brethren, is not only the best, but the only true Cause of God in this World ; for which, all Subjects are bound in Conscience to fight ; the Cause of their lawful Sovereign, that which he Authorises, either by his Person or his Commission, or his Allowance.

This, I say, is the only true Cause even of God, which can justly call for your Swords. Besides this, we know, God has another Cause in the World, that of his own Church, and the true Religion :
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Which, when-ever it is united with the Sovereign Authority; as, blessed be God, it is in our Nation; then that is of all others unquestionably a Cause the most sacred, the nearest and dearest to God himself: But wherever the Cause of the true Religion, and that of the Supreme Power, are at Variance, then God himself is pleas'd to take his own Religion into his peculiar Care; to maintain and advance it in a Way, that of all others is the most Divine; a Way that is more esteem'd of God himself, let me say it, than ever your Way of triumphant Arms and Conquest. For such is the Way of gentle Teaching, and innocent Living, and patient Suffering, and meek Obedience.

By this Method only, God chose to begin the Gospel, and first rais'd the Christian Church, whilst the Empire was Heathen, and the World Idolatrous, and by no other Methods, but such as conform to this; most surely not by forcible Resistance, or open Violence, does God still allow the Gospel to be carried on by Subjects, wherever the Sovereign Power is addicted to Superstition or Idolatry.

But what, say they, must we not arm against the lawful Prince, for the Cause
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of God, and his Truth? How then shall we exercise our Zeal for the true Religion? What then will become of the true Religion it self?

No, not for the Cause of God. For then, at best, you will oppose one Cause of God against another; and, as you order it, the false Cause of God against the true: And thus, for the seeming Interest of Christianity, you infringe the fundamental Precepts of it.

Not you, my Brethren. I speak this for the Sake of some without Doors, if they would but hear us. But alas! they make it a Part of their Religion not to hear us. However, I must say, that Zeal may be irregular, and wicked, though in the Cause of the true Religion. Zeal is not only to be justify'd by the Cause, which raises it; but as much by the Authority on which it acts. As for the right and well-order'd Zeal, when-ever it has not the Countenance or Concurrence of the Magistrate, it ought only to be employ'd in peaceable Actions: In their Wishes, and Studies, and Prayers; in their Counsels and Advices, when call'd to it; but chiefly in amending their own Lives; and turning the Edge of their Zeal on their own Sins; by that innocent, but effectual Way too, to do their

their Parts to preserve and spread the true Faith.

Wherefore, let them no longer intitle the true Religion to their own Discontents, or Ambitions. What Religion can there be, in Mens pursuing violent Paths, on a Pretence of the Glory of God, but contrary to his exprefs Commands? Let them practise its Duties, and God will assert its Interest. Religion desires none to be its Champions, except they first become its Disciples; and such are not they who will *do Evil, that Good may come, Rom. 3. 8.*

Can such Men think to give us better Examples for the propagating Religion, than the first great Masters and Founders of Christianity did? Or can they hope for better Success in it, than they had? And what Way did they judge best? What by Experience did they find best to promote it? Prodigious, indeed, was the Gospel's first Increase: But far more admirable the Means of it! Which were chiefly their Enemies Persecutions, their own Submission, and the Power of Miracles. By the Wonders they wrought, they exercised a Violence over Nature; but none over Laws, or Civil Governments, to change, or to subvert them. By a lowly yielding to the Heathen Empire,

pire, they first soften'd its Fury, then converted it : They piously *render'd to their Caesar the Things that were Cæsars* : They cheerfully paid them Tribute ; readily took up Arms at their Summons ; most willingly perform'd all their Laws, except such as that of Adoring them. Though they could not be induced by Fear, or Favour, to rank their Princes equal with their God ; yet they preserved them in the next Place : Though they would never worship them as Gods upon Earth ; yet they religiously obey'd them as God's Deputies, and Representatives : They judg'd those, who rebell'd against them, worthy of Death, as if they had actually rebell'd against God himself. What else means St. Paul, when in so many Words he declares, That *whosoever resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God ; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves Damnation* ? Rom. 13. 2. Out of all Doubt, he there speaks of the Temporal Power, and of Eternal Damnation to ensue upon resisting it : Than which, what more grievous Punishment could have been inflicted, had they immediately resisted God himself ?

And recollect, I intreat you, the Time when this was so positively pronounced by St. Paul. It must have been written

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under the Reign of *Claudius*, or *Nero*. So that it is evident, all that resisted them, were, without Repentance, in a damnable State. Can there be then any Colour so specious, any Cause so just, in which, instead of Damnation, a Christian Subject may justly expect to receive to himself Salvation, on the Account of Resisting?

Was it then forbidden, on the Penalty of everlasting Death, to rebel against those Emperors, most cruel Tyrants, most fierce Enemies to the Christian Name, Monsters of Men, either of no Religion, or a false One, and yet a Disgrace to Heathenism it self? If however on the most solemn Obligation of Conscience they were not to be opposed, much less destroyed by any Christians; what can be said greater, or more angust, than this? What stronger, what more sacred Confirmation can be given to our conscientious Obedience to another manner of Authority? By how many more Ties, Temporal and Eternal, are we bound to yield a faithful Subjection to a Christian King? Under whose gentle Protection, his Subjects prosper; though some almost against their wills: A King, whose Power is only shewn by moderate Laws, which to his Mildness owe their Moderation: In a word, a King, who is the best Nur-

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sing Father of the best Church in the Christian World.

Against this Doctrine, I know, the Enemies of our Peace will be ready with their old and obsolete Objection, That this is Court Flattery, and a Divinity only fit for Camps, and Standing-Armies. I must tell them, it had been well for our Country, if we had never heard of worse Camp-Divinity than this, we had then never felt the real Tyranny of a Standing-Army. And if they would consult Scripture for other Uses, than to pervert it, they would soon be convinc'd, that this is good Evangelical Divinity. Nay, this Assembly gives me Confidence to inform them, what they will be more loth to hear, that now, God be prais'd, this is not only good Camp, but good City-Divinity too.

But, when we teach the great Doctrine of Obedience, if we must be said to flatter, our Comfort is, we flatter in no worse Company, than that of the Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, and well-nigh of all the divinely inspired Penmen of the Bible. However, when they accuse the Church of *England* of this kind of Flattery, that is, of unshaken Fealty to the Crown; let them consider, which of the Two is the more excusable

Flattery, to humour the uncertain Populace, and the unstable Vulgar, which to serve is the lowest Slavery; or to preach a due Submission to the lawful Establish'd Government, which to obey is the safest Liberty?

You see, my dear Brethren, the Course of my Argument has brought us to such a Cause, as is worthy of your Swords, if Need shall require. Though the Ardour of your Loyal Valour must give me Leave to say, I hope, and I verily believe, there will be no such Need. I am perswaded, and I think I may presage, that this present Alacrity and Vigour, to which you, and his Majesties other Loyal Subjects, have been of late awaken'd, this chearful Posture, and prepared Readiness of your Swords to be drawn, will be an abundant Safety to our King, and Country, without once drawing them. Such will be the Innocence, as well as Justice, of your Arms; such the desperate Condition of your Adversaries; that when-ever they draw their Swords against their Prince, they must throw away the Scabbard: Whilst yours, by God's Providence, being manag'd with an ordinary Watchfulness and Sobriety, will be sufficient to defend him, without ever unsheathing them.

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But if, which God of his infinite Mercy avert, if ever the same tumultuous Spirit, on the same groundless Insinuations, shall once more infatuate the corrupt Part of the Nation to their own Destruction; to their own certainly it will be at last, if they do not again meet with the like Mercy: But if God, in his unsearchable Judgments, shall suffer our Country, in the same Age, to be scourg'd again the same calamitous Way; then what can be a more noble, or more pious Cause, wherein to employ your Arms, than this of the King, and his Family?

A Cause, in which you will scarce meet with an Enemy, but he or his Relations have been already forgiven. And so they will carry about with them the black Guilt, not only of Rebellion, but of an ungrateful Rebellion, after Pardon receiv'd: A Sin, which the Devil is not capable of committing: Whilst you will have a Cause, in which all your several Interests, that are elsewhere scatter'd, of personal Preservation, of political Duty, of conscientious Obedience, are united. In this one Cause, all your Country's Blessings, all your Churches Rights, all your own Securities, are involved: In defending his Life, his Throne, who is
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the Breath of our Nostrils, the Anointed of the Lord : Who has not only this common to him with other Kings, that he is the Image of the Divine Power ; but has this peculiar to himself, or communicated to him with a very few, that he is the Image of the Divine Mercy, of whose Abhorrence of all illegal Oppressions, or arbitrary Proceedings, if the Grace of all his former Oblivions and Indemnities has not yet convinc'd a stubborn Generation of Men, after they have so long enjoy'd the Benefits of them, what need they any other Argument, than this here before me ? That when he has such a Nobility and Gentry, such a Militia of the whole Kingdom, especially yours, entirely at his Service ; yet he is pleas'd to use your Arms no otherwise than now, in the peaceful Exercises of War.

For such a King, whilst his Goodness and Benignity gives you no Occasions to fight for him, what can all his Subjects do less, than to love and revere him in Peace ? To yield him an active Obedience the more cheerfully, since he has taken Care we shall have no Opportunities of giving him a passive Obedience, not only not to hinder, but to perform, his just Commands ? To think our selves only
capable

capable of being a great People, by making him greater? Every Soul to be subject to him? *Rom. 13. 1.* So, if we believe *St. Paul*, there is a Necessity we should be. The Phrase in the Original, is, * *Rom. 13.* * *Ἀνάγκη* 4. which signifies the Necessity, not only of a cold, and forc'd, and meerly just Subjection, but of a regular, well-disposed Submission; not only to live quietly, but in a quiet Order; nay more, to live as it were in Military Order under him. For the Word belongs to your Profession. The Rules of the warlike Art are properly call'd Tackticks, and such should be our Obedience to our Sovereign: So exact, as that which you practise in Armies: So, as strictly to observe his Orders; so, as to be careful not to transgress his Laws for love of him, more than for fear of Punishment: So, as to be silent from Murmurings; loud only in Applauses and Thanks to Almighty God, for the Felicities of his Reign.

Happy all his Subjects! If all were but sensible of their Happiness, and would do their Parts to perpetuate it. Happy, if all would remember what he has forgot; and remember it, not to upbraid others, but to beware, and grow wiser themselves for the future. Happy, if all were such as you; so willing to

obey the King in quiet Times ; so skilful to serve him in the Administrations of his Justice ; so ready, and able, to guard him against all Confusions.

Such an Academy of Arts, as well as Arms ; such a Company of Citizens, such a Nursery of Commanders, cannot, under God, but afford him a sure Defence in his Wars, as you do already supply him with the Riches and Ornaments of Peace.

*Happy is the People that is in such a case !
Happy is the People whose God is the Lord !
The Lord of Hosts, who giveth Salvation to Kings ; who delivereth his Servant David from the hurtful Sword, and arms him with the Sword of Justice, Psal. 144. which he manages by a Law of Kindness : And which, I beseech Almighty God, may flourish in his Hand for many, many Years, in his House, for all Generations to come. Amen.*

FINIS.

A
SERMON

Preached before the Rt. Hon^{ble}

Sir Henry Tulse,
L O R D M A Y O R,

A N D

The Court of ALDERMEN, and
the Citizens of the City of *London*,
on *May 29. 1684.* Being the Anni-
versary-Day of His Majesty's Birth,
and Happy Return to His King-
doms.

By *THOMAS SPRAT*, D.D.
Dean of *Westminster*, One of His
Majesty's Chaplains in Ordinary.

L O N D O N,
Printed for *Charles Brome*, 1710.



A
S E R M O N

Preached before the

Lord Mayor,

May 29. 1684.

P S A L M CXXX. 4.

*There is mercy with thee : therefore
shalt thou be feared.*

So our Old Translation.

*There is forgiveness with thee : that
thou mayst be feared.*

So King James's Bible.

BY comparing this twofold Reading
of these Words, we find the Blessings
of God, declared in my Text,
were very like the double Benefit
our Country receiv'd from Heaven on
this Day : Both Ways extraordinary, and
most

most auspicious ; whether we consider it, as a *Mercy* in the King's Birth ; or, as a *Forgiveness* in his glorious Return.

And, to make this Scripture yet more applicable to our present Purpose, the inspired Penman of this Psalm appears, in the beginning of it, to have been in the same deplorable State these Nations were in for many Years before the Second of these two most happy Days.

- Verf. 1. *Out of the Depths* he had *cried to the Lord*. *Depths*, no doubt of the greatest Temporal Afflictions, and Spiritual Desertions. Then he cried, *Lord, hear my voice : Let thine Ears be attentive to the Voice of my Supplications*. Then, with a deep Sense of Shame and Remorse for what was past, he acknowledg'd, *If thou, Lord, should'st mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand ?* So devoutly he cried, so passionately bewail'd his former Rebellions against Heaven, never ceasing to implore Pardon for them, till he had found by comfortable Experience, *that there is mercy, and forgiveness with God*.
- Verf. 2.
- Verf. 3.
- Verf. 4.

A perfect Image this of these Three Kingdom's Calamities, I may say, of our Guilt, before this blessed Day of Restoration ; and of our Deliverance from the Calamities, our Indemnity from the Guilt, by Means of this Day.

Out

Out of our depths also we had cried to the Lord. *Depths*, if ever any were, of Miseries, and Distractions in Church and State. We then either did, or should have confess'd, that if *God*, or the *King*, had mark'd *Iniquities* against God, or the King, few or none could have stood. When, by an adorable Providence, the remaining Loyal Part of the Nation, who had long *cried to the Lord* for this Day, found inexpressible *Mercy* upon it: Nay, the very disloyal Part, who had *cried to the Lord* too, but against it, even they enjoyed an unparallel'd *Forgiveness* by it.

Thus far the Psalmist's Case, and ours, were alike; in our Distresses; in our Recoveries. 'Twere well for us, if the Resemblance between him, and us, would hold out so to the End. For after he had been thus oppress'd on Earth, and relieved from Heaven, how did he behave himself? He never forgot, strove never to forfeit, presently made the best Use of all this Mercy, and Forgiveness: Declared not only what was afterwards said of *Mary Magdalen*, that he *loved much*, but that he *fear'd much*, because much had been *forgiven* him.

And thenceforth accordingly resolves, that *by waiting for the Lord, with a sted-* Vers. 5.
fast

- Verf. 6. *fast hope in his word : By waiting for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning ; he will lay hold on the plentiful redemption, that is with him ; who is not only able to redeem, but shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities : As, with a full Assurance of Faith, he concludes the Psalm.*
- Verf. 7.
- Verf. 8.

It would be, I doubt, but a very melancholy Enquiry, an Employment fitter for a Day of Humiliation, than for so great a Festival, should we go strictly to examine, Whether we, the People of these Nations, have made the Psalmist's Practice our Example ? Sure I am, it was, and is still our bounden Duty so to do : A Duty incumbent on us all the Days of our Lives ; especially on these Days of our solemn Thanksgivings.

Then, my dear Brethren, we rejoice the best Way for *Mercy*, and *Forgiveness* received from God, and God's Representative the King ; when we embrace the *Forgiveness* so, as to take more Care of not offending in the like Kind for the future ; when we remember the *Mercies* so, as not to surfeit our selves with the Fruits of them ; so, as not only to applaud the Divine Author of them with empty Words, and Praises : But when we make our Joy solid, and lasting ; when

when we mingle it not with Levity; or Vanity, too incident to those that are overjoy'd, but with the cheerful Gravity, the easy Severity of a Christian Life. And so we do, when we temper our Joy with *Fear*, a true *Fear* of God.

The Words of my Text have a plain Meaning, but a doubtful Expression, both in our own, and in the learned Languages.

There is Mercy, or Forgiveness *with* παρὰ thee, or in thee, from thee, round a- ὅτι. bout thee: In his incomprehensible Essence: In all the Attributes of his Divinity: In his very Wrath, there is a Long-suffering: In his very Revenge, there is a forbearing Mercy. So essential is Mercy to him; so widely spreading from him; so, upon all Accounts, *with* him, not only that he may be admired, or worship'd, much less that he may be neglected, or presumed upon, but *that thou mayst be feared*.

There is Mercy *with* thee, because of thy Ἐπειὴ τὸ Name: So the Septuagint. His Nature ὁνόματι is merciful. His Name is agreeable to τῷ. his Nature. He is a God of Mercies, and Forgivenesses, abundant in Goodness as in Truth, in both Infinite.

There is Mercy *with* thee, because of Διὰ τὴν thy Law: So another Reading of the νόμον σου. Words.

Words. And it is well for us sinful Creatures, that there is so : That God has a *Mercy*, as well as a *Law* : That he has *Forgiveness*, because of that *Law* : That the Sweetness of his Mercy, is answerable to the Exactness of his Law : That the Tenderness of his Forgiveness far exceeds all our obstinate Breach of his Law, *else no flesh living could be justified in his sight.*

But both our Translations render it nearer the Original : *That thou mayst be fear'd*; so the New : *Therefore shalt thou be fear'd*; so the Old Bible. The first, signifying the Psalmist's unfeigned Acknowledgment of his Duty : The second, containing his firm Intention, and Vow to perform it.

So that the Words thus explain'd, may be summ'd up in two Parts.

1st, The great Foundation of this whole Discourse : *The Mercy, the Forgiveness*, that is, *with God.*

2^{dly}, The great Obligation of special Dependance, and Service, those *Mercies* lay upon us, to *fear* the only Donor of them all.

From which general Contemplation of the Mercies of God, and their principal Design; it will be our next Business to bring our Thoughts nearer home,

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to the great End of this Day's particular *Mercy*. Particular ! It was an Universal *Mercy*. And if we shall find it to have been so, that the Favour in it on God's Part towards us was here at least as much, as there it could be to the Psalmist ; then what can we do less on our Part, but to imitate his steady Resolution of *Fearing God* ? And in order to that, continually to wait for the Lord, to hope for him in his own Way, the Way of his own Word, and Church : To wait for him, more than they that watch for the Morning ; even more than we once watch'd, and wished for the Morning of this Day.

My First Particular is that, which the Psalmist justly makes the Ground of his whole Argument : The *Mercy, and Forgiveness*, that is *with God*.

The inexhaustible Love of God to Mankind, as it is the chief Subject of the written Word of God, and the very End for which it was all written ; so it is that, on which the Holy Scripture, the New Testament especially, and this Book of *Psalms*, one of the most Gospel-like Parts of the Old Testament, does more vary its Expressions, and in which the Holy Ghost seems more delighted to enlarge it self, than on any other Divine Matter whatsoever. V Through-

Throughout the whole Bible, we find it represented to us by many the most significant Phrases, Similitudes, and Amplifications. It is often here resembled to the greatest Degrees of Kindness, which we behold in the Sublunary World. Sometimes it is compar'd to the natural Tenderness for their Young, of those Creatures, that are only guided by the Motions and Inclinations of Sense. Sometimes it is likened to the higher and better directed Affections of Mankind ; to the Sympathy and Endearments of a Friend ; to the provident Care and Indulgence of a Father ; to the soft Passions and Yearnings of a Mother.

And all these coming infinitely short, as needs they must : For how can Earth, or frail Mortality, supply Examples, or Imaginations, large or tender enough, to set forth to us the heavenly Compassions ? From thence, the Scripture carries our Thoughts into Heaven it self : There gives us a view of the highest, and most excellent Images of Goodness ; which are more than Tongue can signify, or Heart can conceive to be, and yet are in the Divine Nature ; and are manifested to us in all the distinct Works of the ever-blessed Trinity : The undeserv'd Favours of a Creator and Preserver ; the

unspeakable Consolations of a Comforter; the self-denying Sufferings of a Saviour, who took on himself our Flesh, and died in the Flesh to save us.

Now of all this bottomless Treasure of Eloquence, by which the Riches of God's Goodness are set off to us in holy Writ, this in my Text is one of the most affectionate Words, and therefore it ought to be proportionably effectual on our Practice. It is not only *Mercy*, but *Forgiveness*. That with God, who is infinitely above us in Power, was infinitely offended by our Sins; with him however, there is not only a common Favour, or a daily Support of, or a continued Bounty towards us; not only Gentleness to Inferiors, or Liberality to those that most need it, or Beneficence to those that never merited it: But that with him there is *Forgiveness*, Peace with Enemies, Reconciliation with Rebels, the Requital of the freest Grace for the highest Provocations: That after all his other Mercies of Kindness had been so often abused by us; yet with him however, still there is a Mercy of Pity and Commiseration: Which as it is, in Heaven, the very Crown of all the blessed Attributes in the Eternal Power and Godhead; so, upon Earth, it is the most God-like Perfection

Perfection of which the Heart of Man is capable.

I will not attempt to reckon up an exact Particular of all the Divine Mercies, and Forgivenesses, for which we all stand engaged to the Divine Benignity. If they could be so soon reckon'd up, they were not so Divine as they are. If they could be spread before us in one View, would it not be a severe Objection, a just Cause of Sorrow to the best of us, to behold so immense a Catalogue of our Obligations? Whereof the far greater Part is left wilfully uncancell'd by us, because of our Ingratitude. And, alas! do what we our selves can, very much of it will be always unpaid, by reason of our Inability.

Of God's Mercy to all his Creatures, of his Forgiveness moreover to Mankind, may not the same be truly affirm'd, that is of his Presence? Wherever he is, he is merciful: He has Matter to forgive; he is willing to forgive; and he is every where.

Which Way soever we turn our Thoughts, whether we regard the present Life, or the future: Whether we consider our selves as the Works of his Hands, as we are Men; or of his Grace, as we are Christians: Or, as I may say, as the Works of our own Hands, as we
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are Sinners : If we observe from how many Terms of Enmity, and distance God has freed us ; with how many Titles of Nearness and Relation he has endear'd us : If we recollect, how absolute our Dependence is upon him ; how universal our Receipts are from him : Which Way soever we look, his Mercies are so far beyond our repaying by Deeds, that they are far above our Acknowledgment by Words ; nay, beyond the very Conceptions of our Hearts. We may as well undertake to comprehend God himself, who is certainly incomprehensible. For among all the Mercies he bestows on the Sons of Men, one, and that the Chief is, that as he forgives us our selves, so he gives us himself.

Yet, though the Mercies of God are so far beyond our Recompensing, that not only our Thanks, but we our selves, are said to be *less than the Least of them* : This does not at all acquit us of our Duty ; rather the greatest Bonds are laid upon us thereby. We see, the Psalmist does not only here present us with a pleasant Prospect, but with a serious View of God's Mercies : He shews us, that we are therefore ty'd to some special and irrevocable Obligations.

And what to do ? What Retribution

to make? All Benefits receiv'd, should be answer'd by a greater Requital, if possible, or by an equal good Will at least. Now for us Men to think of making a greater, or an equal Return to Heaven, were Impiety. How indeed can we, upon our own Strength, hope to make any? Since all the Return we can make to God, is of no Value at all of it self; but only according to the Price, which his Pity, not his Justice, puts upon it.

Wherefore, our most gracious Benefactor has prescribed the Proportion of our Requital, not at all according to the Vastness of our Receipts, but rather with respect to the scanty Measure of our weak Abilities, and that accepted by his Grace, which is without Measure. So that the very Return of Thanks for his Mercies, which God has injoyn'd us, is so manag'd by him, as to become a new Degree of Mercy to us. For the most perfect Return of Thanks that God requires of us, and we can make, yet not without his Help neither, is that which we of all Things ought most to desire; and it is this in my Text, that because there is *Mercy and Forgiveness with God*, therefore we should *fear him*: Which is my Second Particular.

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By *Fear*, in this Place, is not at all meant that, which the Philosopher describes to be a Passion of the Soul, by which, Men that are weaker strive to scape the Force of the Stronger, and to fly from all Things that have a Power of doing them Hurt. Not that *Fear*. For so good Men may and ought to *fear* the Devil; so the Devils themselves do *fear* God, when they *believe, and tremble*. And so may the King's irreconcilable Enemies, who, next to the Infernal Fiends, must be one of the vilest Parts of the Creation; so may they always *fear* the Punishment due to so horrid an Impenitency.

Nor by *fearing* God, is here intended any servile Dread, or abject Awe, of his uncontrolable Dominion, and terrible Majesty; as he is the great Judge, and Avenger of all Sin. Not that *Fear*. For so the damned Spirits in Hell do *fear* God; whilst they suffer the Extremity of his Wrath, for having rejected his Mercy. So irreparably wretched is the Condition of all wicked Men, all Rebels against God, all that are impenitently so; and, I know not how, Rebellion is in this Sense also as the Sin of Witchcraft, that it is too generally accompanied with Impenitency. Wherefore, of such Men, it is the peculiar Curse, whilst they are

in this World, that they shall *fear*, where no *Fear* is. In the next World they shall *fear* too, but after another manner. There they shall have but too just a Cause for *Fear*, which they shall never be able either by Strength or Art to avoid, or by Intreaties to deprecate; though God himself had often before most passionately intreated them to avoid it.

Nor, Lastly, by *fearing God*, is here only signified some blind Reverence, or confused Acknowledgment of his Omnipotence, as he is Sovereign Lord of the Universe. Neither this *Fear*. For so a carnal Man without Grace, (without real Grace, I mean, not the Counterfeit) so a Man that *is without God in the World*, may, in some imperfect Sense, *fear God*; may sometimes revere his Power, may tremble at his Thunder, may be somewhat startled at his apparent Judgments, and melted a little by his undeserved Mercies; and yet at last have no Share in his Forgiveness, nor in the *plenteous Salvation* that is with him, though it be never so *plenteous*.

But these are all narrow, ignoble, legal Interpretations of *fearing God*. The *Fear*, in my Text, we find does only proceed from a Sense of God's *Forgiveness*; and so can only be found in those whom he will forgive,

forgive, whom he has forgiven. Wherefore, the Phrase is to be taken in the most comfortable and Evangelical Meaning, As, the *Fear of the Lord is the Beginning*, and the Perfection too, of all *Wisdom*: As it is most usually understood in the Word of God, to comprize the principal Acts of all true Faith, Devotion, and Holiness; including the whole Compass of all sincere and undefiled Religion: Such a *Fear of God*, as will teach us to praise him openly, and worship him outwardly, so as to love him inwardly; and so as both inwardly and outwardly to obey him: And all this most reasonably, because of the *Mercy and Forgiveness* that is *with him*.

First, I say, to praise and adore him publickly for his Mercies. A Work most becoming the Children of Men. Of all the Creatures, are not we most fitted for it, by reason of our greater Mercies receiv'd? Our greater Capacities to understand, and declare our Reception of them? And are we not therefore most obliged to it for the same Reasons?

But if we should be, not only so irreligious, but so unmanly, as to neglect it, and be silent: If, contrary to our very Nature, we should look downward, and not rather upward, to *the day spring from on high*,

high, that has visited us; yet still God has not left himself without Witness : Even all the other Works of his Hands, all Ranks of Beings, all Orders of the Creation, would proclaim the Providence, and make out the Goodness of their Creator.

Thus much do all the inferior Creatures. And how infinitely is their Account of Mercies receiv'd short of ours? So short, that the greatest Part of the Creation was not made so much to enjoy the Mercies of God, and to be sensible of that Enjoyment, as to be Mercies to us. What heinous Forgetfulness, and Sin, would it then be in us, when even the inanimate and irrational Beings, that were made for our Sakes, shall all contribute to the Praise of their Maker's Bounty : If we alone shall be insensible of his Bounty, or negligent of his Praise; we, for whose Sakes they were made, and for whose Service they were ordained by him!

Wherefore, the praising God for his Mercy, for his Forgiveness, is the peculiar Duty of Mankind : As Forgiveness is the proper Act of his Mercy to us. All other Kinds of Creatures never did partake of it. All below Mankind are not the proper Object of it. All above us,

as the Angels, when they offended, could never obtain it. With his Praises then, our Hearts should be always full, our Tongues often sounding.

But that is not all. The truest Way of praising God, is not only perform'd by a bare praising him. It is indeed a pleasant Thing to tell how good and gracious the Lord is. Yet it is not only merely pleasant to tell : There is much Work, and real Labour, and diligent Service, that must ensue. Though 'tis true, that Work it self, if rightly perform'd, will be also pleasant in the End, and that *Service a perfect Freedom.*

However, there is first much Work required on our Parts. Though the Goodness of God is sweet in its Contemplation ; yet it cannot be so to any Purpose to us, except it produce in us answerable Effects. Else, the fruitless Contemplation of it were most uncomfortable. For it would the more accuse us of *neglecting so great a Salvation.*

Wherefore most properly speaks my Text, *There is Mercy with thee, that thou mayst be fear'd.* Mercy with God, that he may be fear'd ! Why not rather that he may be lov'd ? Yes, that without all Question. The Mercies of God towards us, as they only flow from his Love, so they ought

ought to produce Love in us : Yet not only Love, but Fear ; such a Fear as can never be divided from Love ; such a Love, as is always joyn'd with a Dread of offending, a jealousy of displeasing, the Person beloved ; and such is a true Gospel-Love ; such is a true filial Fear of God.

What I have said on the general Part of my Method propos'd, the *Mercy* and *Forgiveness* that is *with God*, and the principal Reason why it is with him ; this I have premis'd, as briefly as I could, in so weighty and copious an Argument, as a necessary Introduction for the applying my Text to our selves, and to this glorious Day of *Mercy* and *Forgiveness*.

A Day, of which, amongst its many other Felicities, this is none of the least, that, do what we our selves could, not to deserve any more of these Days ; do what our worst Adversaries could, that we should have no more of them : Yet neither our Sins, nor their Malice, have prevail'd. But we are still met in the House of God, in a Congregation of true and dutiful Sons of the Church of *England* ; in the midst of this, His Majesty's always best-beloved, now I am sure I may say, most deservedly beloved City : Here we are met once again to
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solemnize this Day, and to do it as joyfully as we did at first; nay more, if possible: Since now by the late Defeat of the new Conspiracies of his Majesty's old and new Enemies; though it is prodigious he should have any new Ones; however, now by the blessed prospect of Peace maintain'd, and Justice restor'd, and Rebellion once more destroy'd by its own Arts; now by the renew'd Affections, and united Acclamations of all good Men from all Quarters of the Land; by the joint Consent of Heaven and Earth; by the Voice of God, and of the People, which we have been told is the Voice of God: The Voice, not of the unruly Tumult, and giddy Populace, but of the good, loyal, and peaceably-devout People, that is as the Voice of God: And by all these, methinks, I am encouraged to call this Day a New Resurrection, as it were, of that great Nine and twentieth Day of *May*, and this Year the very Restoration of the King's Restoration.

So perpetually fresh and triumphant ought to be, and I may venture to presage, will be, in all Ages to come, the precious Memory of this Day: Whereof it may be justly affirm'd, that except the general Redemption of all Nations, on a Day of all others the most memorable; that Day,
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which was the Fountain of all the good Things we obtain'd on this, or any other Day : But except that, on this Day we had heap'd on us the greatest Blessings that perhaps ever any Nation under Heaven receiv'd from it on any one Day.

To God alone be the Glory of all. For what, I beseech you, can be said less of a Day, whose Mercy was so diffusive, that it extended to its Enemies, as well as Friends ? Laid good and sure Foundations, if they and we had but built upon them, to make us and them, and all that come after us, happy in all our great Interests, whether Temporal or Spiritual.

To you, the ancient Friends, and well-wishers of this Day ; the old Loyal Party I mean, for I doubt not but to many such I speak ; you especially who endured the Loss of your Country, in hope of returning on this Day ; you, who so many Years preferr'd an honourable Exile, before the enjoying such a Country without the King : To you, I will not say, this was a Day of *Mercy*, only because you were restor'd to your Estates and Possessions by it. Those you had sufficiently shewn, you never esteem'd as your chief Goods ; and therefore I will not reckon them as the principal Blessings

sings you reapt on this Day: But to you, this was a Mercy worthy of your Perseverance in such a Cause, to behold the King, and with the King, his and your beloved Church of *England* restor'd. The Church, which was all the while your constant Companion, your chief Delight, and sometimes almost your only Comforter. This Church you behold on this Day, decently re-establish'd in its own Temples, whose Tabernacle you had so long followed in the Wilderness.

Thus was it to you a Mercy. How much more was it so to those of us, who, by an unhappy Fate, were either born, or bred up in those miserable Times; who had not the Honour of such a Banishment abroad, but had the Necessity of an inglorious Confinement at home; how much, on all Accounts to us, was this a Day of Mercy!

A Day, which in Exchange of an unlawful Yoke of Tyranny, and the worst of Tyrannies imposed on us by our Fellow-Subjects: Return'd to us the easy and blessed Government of our Lawful Prince. A Day, that secur'd to us a lasting, safe, and innocent Peace; not a false or slavish Peace, like that we had before, worse than the very State of War. A Day, which gave us to know what a
true

true Liberty of Conscience is, instead of a Licentiousness. A Day, which restor'd our King to his Rights and Prerogatives, our Country to its Privileges and Laws; for the false Shews of which Things it had so bitterly suffer'd.

But what need I prove that to you, and to us, this was a Day of Mercy? When it was Mercy and Forgiveness to its implacable Enemies.

To some of them, it was the first innocent Day of their whole Lives. Oh! had it not been the last. To them it was a Forgiveness on Earth of all their past Crimes: And might have been so in Heaven too, if once they would but have learnt to be less familiar with God, and more to fear him. However, to them it was a Mercy, that it made them for a time quiet and harmless, whether they would or no: That without their own personal Ruin, it ruin'd their usurped Powers, which had render'd them so guilty towards God, so factious amongst Themselves, so hated of all good Men, and at last of all Mankind.

But this one Day most seasonably took from them the Opportunities of destroying themselves as well as us, by the numberless Confusions and Phrenies of Enthusiastick Zeal. This Day gently de-
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prived them of those wretched Arms, by which they had been so long successful against Truth, and the true Religion; which to be, is really the greatest of Miseries.

Wherefore to the whole *English* Name, and Nation, was this a Day of Mercy. By this Day, our Age has been enrich'd with all the Blessings of the right Hand, and of the left. By this, we were taught Precepts and Examples, sufficient to transmit those Blessings entire to all Posterity. By this, the true Cause of God, and of the Kingdom, was for ever vindicated by divine Providence against the false Cause. By this, divine Providence it self was vindicated; clear'd from the twenty Years Mischiefs, and Desolations, which their deluded Authors were wont most arrogantly to impute to the special Favour and Indulgence of divine Providence.

But on this Day, Sedition and Rebellion in the State found, or should have found, its fatal Period. Now it might have learnt, that although it may be for a Time perniciously victorious, yet it can never be quietly settled in Peace: That although God may sometimes in Wrath permit, yet he never in Kindness encourages prosperous Wickedness.

In a Word, on this Day Schism and Sacrilege in the Church were abundantly confounded; and should once for all have been convinc'd, that no real Arm of Flesh, which for a Time they had no counterfeit Assistance of the Heavenly Spirit, which they pretended to, can always, can long protect them, against the true Celestial Arms of the Unity, Order, Truth and Charity, of the Church of *England*, the divine Power of its Piety, the invincible Spirit of its Loyalty.

This therefore also is the Day which the Lord has made. He made it by his all-wise Counsel, by his out-stretched Arm; by a Way indeed of all others the most Divine, by his Counsel more than by his Arm. By the admirable Conduct of a Brave General, whose Name shall ever flourish with this Day. Yet not so much by his undaunted Valour, or conquering Hand, as by his deep Wisdom, and peaceful Arts. We admir'd the Heroick Courage of his undertaking the Design. But more, we loved, we blessed, the calm Prudence of its Management, the easy Gentleness of its Execution. Scarce a Sword all the while then drawn, amidst so many Armies; yet all contending for so much more than for one single

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Victory. Scarce a Drop of Blood spilt, till Justice came to draw its Sword, which too was sheath'd almost as soon as drawn. So it was fit, that a mild and peaceful Reign should be introduced only by the Methods of Mildness and Peace.

We behold, my dear Brethren, how manifold was the Mercy of God to us on this Day.

If either the Time, or your Patience, or my Voice, would permit, 'twould be well worth our while to consider yet farther, by how many marvellous Degrees of multiplied Preservations, and unexpected Protections of his Majesty's Life, and Crowns, God has ever since taken Care to guard and defend his own gracious Gift on this Day; and now, after four and twenty Years, has deliver'd down to us the Mercy of it safe and secure, and even augmented.

Amongst many other Instances of this Kind never to be forgotten, if you would give me Leave, there is one signal and extraordinary Providence, which being freshest in our Memories, methinks cannot at this Time, without Injustice to God and Man, be wholly passed by in Silence: I mean, the most astonishing Deliverance of the King and King-

dom from the late horrid Conspiracy.

Heaven and Earth knows, that the Hellish Design was spread into Two most villainous Enterprises: One, the Subversion of the King's Government, by an open Insurrection against him in his Politick Capacity: The other, the Murder of his Sacred Person: Which Two, the Rebellious Principles of the late Wars taught Rebels to distinguish, in order to the Destruction of both.

Of the Rebellion design'd; Heats, Stirs, as some have pleas'd to complement it: But of that, no honest *English* Man can either speak or think, without extreme Detestation; if we either reflect on the Plenty and Tranquility we enjoy, and our Enemies would have overthrown; that we were and are the happiest People in *Europe*, did we but equally understand and value our own Happiness: Or if we shall recollect, not only what we had lost, had the detestable Conspiracy succeeded, but also from whom, from what kind of Enemies we were deliver'd by its wonderful Defeat.

Were they not either Disciples of the very same ill Parties, and Sects of Men, or many of them the very same Men, who had once before ruin'd us by the
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same popular Pretences and ill-applied Names of Things they never meant, of Liberty, Property, and Conscience?

For did we not all the while know the generality of the Men themselves to be Atheists in Religion, to whom Nothing was sacred, who made all Things prophane? Monsters in Morality, to whom Nothing was unlawful, all Things common? Republicans in Opinion, to whom the easiest Laws of their own Country seem'd Oppression, the mildest Monarchy in the World Tyranny? Men, whose black Designs required them to be close, and hypocritical; but their Lives proved them to be loose and debauch'd. Men, either of desperate Fortunes, or, which is worse, in plentiful Fortunes, of desperate Principles. Men fierce, cruel, religiously cruel towards others, boldly irreligious themselves. Men, whom Rebellion once prosperous had taught to be rebellious; but Rebellion often forgiven, could never teach them either Gratitude, or Quiet.

Such had been the blessed Reformers and Restorers of your Liberties and Laws, Privileges and Consciences, by the desperate Insurrection intended, if God had not miraculously prevented it.

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Of the other Part of the Diabolical Plot, the cruel Affassination of his Majesty's and his Royal Highness's Persons at the *Rye* ; of that, I know you cannot but on the one Side with the highest Indignation, on the other with an Extasy of Joy, acknowledge, that as all the most mysterious Subtilties, and masterly Strokes of Hell's Malice, were join'd in its secret Contrivance : So the wisest and most gracious Arts, as I may call them, of the divine Favour, were visibly practised in its Disappointment.

Of the Place where this abominable Scene was laid, as many of you as know it must confess, that it was a Spot of Ground, the fittest in the whole World for the Attempting such an execrable Parricide. A retir'd Passage out of the publick Road ; easy to be defended by those within, hard to be approach'd from without. A House Solitary and Ruinous, a Seat of Melancholy and Horror : A fit Emblem of the furious Intent of the wretched Possessor's Mind.

There the Anointed of the Lord had been taken in a Snare. I could not have uttered these Words, but that now I can say, the Snare is broken, and we are escap'd. There, however, had the best of Kings, the Breath of our Nostrils, been

been excluded from the Assistance of his few Guards, whom the Consciousness of his own Innocence had made few: There he passing by secure, as he might well think himself secure in the settled Peace of all his other Dominions; secure, in the Company of a Valiant and Invincible Brother sitting by his Side; secure, in the eminent Loyalty of that particular County: But above all, secure in his own unequal'd Mercy to all his Enemies; to whom he had done as much as King or Man could do, to make them his Friends. However, there had the King been on a sudden assaulted by unseen, treacherous Subjects, armed Villains, chosen Assassins, Veterans in Mischief and Slaughter, Men kept alive only by his Forgiveness: Yet there exposed, defenceless, unarm'd, unforewarn'd, had the King—I can say no more; and God for ever be glorified, our Enemies can say no more.

For then, God from on High interposed. God had seen the whole Preparation of the Villany; he saw all their closest Cabals, and most daring Resolutions. He saw them, and frown'd with Disdain at the Fury of their Wrath: Smiled with Contempt at the Folly of their Malice. God knew when it was

Time for him to appear; when a King's Rescue would become a Work worthy of God's Omnipotence.

He knew, and he appear'd: He appear'd in such a Manner, as to make the Glory of his immediate Presence unquestionable. God wrought not then by the slow Methods of his common Providence: Not then by bare natural Signs, or obscure Presages, or doubtful Tokens of his Pleasure: But by a flaming Hand lift up on High, by a dreadful Fire; That being made the prodigious Occasion of so great a Mercy, which is otherwise esteem'd a dismal Judgment,

That surprising Fire of *New-Market*, only Chance or Negligence then seem'd to have kindled. But the Event shews it came from a higher, and a better Cause. By that, was the good King rous'd on a sudden, driven first out of his own Lodgings, then by the Smoke and Ashes of it pursued out of Town; so forc'd thence home to *Whitehall* before his appointed Time, and his Enemies black Hour prefix'd.

Thus God conducted him hither safe, and untouch'd, passing just by that same infamous *Rye*; which was then innocent, because then unprovided; that otherwise might have been the fatal Womb

Womb of so many unspeakable Mischiefs.

But hitherto, and for some Months after, you may remember, the King suspected nothing of his Danger, imagined nothing of his Escape after he was escap'd; perceiv'd not as yet the heavenly Protection that had cover'd his Head, I will not say in the Day of Battel, but of his ordinary Travelling, which might have proved to him more dangerous than the fiercest Battel. As yet, the wicked Conspiracy was not dissolv'd, nor as yet were all their merciless Hopes lost: The same Wretches, though somewhat struck with so great a Disappointment, yet still met, and combin'd, still contriv'd new Places, provided new Weapons, sought out new Opportunities, to perpetrate the same Deed. Still some of them thought, what one of them, the accursed *Ferguson*, had Impudence enough to say; That by this Accident, the King was not so much deliver'd, as reserv'd for some greater Judgment.

When, Lo! in the midst of our profound Security, one of the Chief Partakers in the dire Conspiracy, being himself not suspected, not invited, not tempted by Promises, not frighted by Threatnings, but only those of his own Conscience;

science ; then he, in meer remorse, and dread of his Guilt, came voluntarily in, and reveal'd the hidden Work of Dark-ness.

And God soon seconded his own Favour so well begun. By swift Degrees, so many new Discoveries were made : So many sensible concurring Proofs strengthened each other : So many undeniable Demonstrations of all Circumstances confirm'd all : So many Confessions of the Principal, both living and dying Plotters broke forth : And they were plain Confessions, even when they were taught most to Prevaricate, and most cunningly to Equivocate : For of those impious Arts, the Jesuits are not now the only Masters ; but so many, and so clear Evidences did on a sudden surround and illustrate the whole Matter of Fact : One particularly, which I am loth to mention, and I cannot mention it, but with Pity, as well as Horror ; That lamentable Self-Murder, I mean, which yet was a much stronger Proof, than many living Witnesses could have been. All this, I say, meeting together, to convince the whole World of the Reality of this Conspiracy. I dare now pronounce, that next the having a Share in the detested Treason it self, the next Crime is the not Believing it.

it. I mean, the seeming not to believe it: For our Enemies themselves cannot but believe it. And most certainly, whoever shall now pretend not to believe that this Plot was real, it may justly be concluded, the same Men, at the same Time, do desire it had taken but too real an Effect. But I forbear.

We have heard what inestimable Mercy there was with God for us: First, by so miraculously giving us, and then in an equally miraculous Course of Providence, by continuing to us the Mercy of this Day.

But to what Purpose, think we, was all this Mercy with God for us? Only that it might be thus faintly repeated, and imperfectly rejoyced in once a Year? That cannot be sufficient. The greatest, and most durable End of this Day's Mercy, is undoubtedly the same that we find in my Text to be the Chief Intention of all God's Mercies: That therefore the Divine Majesty should be the more *fear'd*.

Indeed, all God's Mercies do exact from us a suitable Return of some kind of *Fear*; yet some more than others. Those his Mercies, that flow gently down from Heaven, calmly falling on all our Heads every Day, in blessed Influences relating

to this Life, or the next, but without any great Noise, or astonishing Circumstances : They require all our Love, all our Thanks, and some Fear too mingled with them. A Fear of vilifying them by Neglect, or forfeiting them by Abuse.

But such Mercies as these before us, Preservations of Crown'd Heads, and Royal Families, Devastations of Kingdoms prevented, mighty Nations freed from Slavery : These come, when they come upon us, with a greater Force and Concussion of Thoughts, and though with a delightful, yet, give me Leave to say it, with a formidable Train of terrible Delights. These Mercies therefore, as they expect from us our equal Love of God, so they may well demand our greater Fear of him : More of our Submission to his Power, and of our Reliance on his Will : More of our Adoration of his unsearchable Counsels, and of our humble Thankfulness for his declared Goodness.

Thus, most solemnly, does this Mercy call for our Fear of God, according to all the Interpretations of the Word : That we fear him so, as to reverence him for all the secret Degrees of ripening this Mercy foregoing this Day : That we fear him so, as to bless him for all the ensuing

ing happy Days we have ever since enjoy'd, as a Consequence of this : That we fear him so, as to *stand in awe*, and so as to *sin no more* : That with a careful Diligence in our particular Duties, with a zealous Fear of God, with an unwearied Vigilance over our Selves, with a dutiful Watchfulness for our King too in our several Stations, we dread, and revere God for this, and all his other Mercies, lest we be forc'd to do so for his Judgments ; since the same God, who has thus bestow'd on us the greatest of Mercies, is also able to inflict Judgments as great.

That is evidently one Part of our Duty, rising from the Contemplation of this Day's Mercy ; for this undeniable Reason, we should all be induced not to disobey, or dishonour, but to *fear God*.

There is still behind, another very considerable Part of it, which respects God too, though it seems more immediately to concern the King. It is, that the Mercy of God on this Day, the Forgiveness which God put into the King's Heart to be willing, into his Hands to be able, to dispense to all his Subjects : This should lead us all to *fear*, that is, in Scripture Language, to *honour the King*.

But this Doctrine, which elsewhere is the most proper Subject of this Day's Solemnity,

lemnity, I thank God, in this Assembly, I need not spend Time to inforce. Your known and steady Loyalty has saved me that Labour. Yet, what it were superfluous to advise the King's Friends, is, God knows, but too seasonable to wish his Enemies would do.

Let it therefore be the fervent charitable Prayer of us, and of all Loyal Minds, on this Day: And true Loyalty is most generally accompanied with true Charity: That God at last would *turn* the King's Enemies *Hearts*, and *so they shall be turn'd*. From what, less than God's Mercy, can we expect so great a Change, since all the King's Mercy has not been able to effect it? But oh! that now, in this our Day, their Day too once it was as properly as ours, and may be so again by their Amendment: Oh! that now they would *mind the Things that belong to all our Peace*. Oh! that now they would understand, that the best and only lawful Way to preserve the Reformed Religion amongst us, is to defend it only its own Way, and not by practising its very Enemies Principles. Oh! that now they would reflect with Grief on all their fresh Contrivances against his Majesty's Crown and Dignity: And if for no other, yet for
this

this Reason they would seriously repent of them, that the King was so ready to forgive all their old Offences, without so much as staying for their Repentance. Oh! that now at length they would begin to fear the King for his Mercy; since, amidst all his Power hitherto, they have never had any other just Cause imaginable to fear him. Oh! that henceforth they would forbear, upon any more pretences of Reforming the Church and State, to violate that Royal Goodness, which, when all was done, was, next under God, only able to heal the Breaches, and compose the Distractions, they had caus'd once before, under the Disguise of such Reformati^ons.

God, of his infinite Compassions, grant, that they may be Converted, and we United; that without any other Fear, but of God, and the King, we may serve God all the Days of our Lives; that we may long enjoy the King's Mercies, and they may have no more such Need of his Forgiveness. *Amen.*

SK
FINIS.

12 JY 62

A
SERMON
Preached before the
King and Queen,
A T
WHITEHALL,
On *Good-Friday*, 1690.

By *THOMAS SPRAT*, D.D.
Lord Bishop of *Rocheſter*, and Dean
of *Westminſter*.

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Lord Bishop of Exeter, and Dean
of Westminster.
Presented by the Rev. James Connors.

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Adm. Term
A.
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AT

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On Good-Friday, 1690.

I St. PET. II. Part of Ver. 21, 22.

*Christ also suffer'd for us, leaving
us an Example, that ye should fol-
low his Steps,
Who did no Sin.*

THE Subject of our Devout Me-
ditations on this Blessed Day, is
our dear Redeemer's Passion;
and the last most bitter Part of it, his
humbling himself so, as to become Obedient Phil. 2. 8.

1 Cor. I.
18.

to Death, even the Death of the Cross; and the Preaching of this Cross, though (as St. Paul tells us) *To them that Perish it is Foolishness*, yet he also assures us, *to as many as are Saved, 'it is the Power of God.*

Now that none of Us should be found in the Number of those, who *Perish* by foolishly despising the Doctrine of a Crucified Saviour, but rather that we may all be wise to Salvation, by meekly adoring this Power of God, and the wondrous Depths of Divine Love in it, and by rightly applying the unspeakable Fruits of it to our selves, our Church has taken all imaginable Care to represent it to us in the most serious and efficacious Manner, and to fix it firmly on our Minds and Consciences, by frequent and affectionate Repetition of all its Parts and Aggravations.

So that if we shall reflect on the whole Annual Circle of our Publick Devotions, 'twere easy to observe, that our Saviour's Sufferings are therein oftener reiterated, and more in Proportion, insisted on, than perhaps any other Article of our *pure and undefiled Religion*: Our Church in this, as in all Things else, exactly following the Blessed Pattern of the first, and purest Ages, as they

they did the Gospel of Christ; which seems to dispense, and measure out to us, the Benefits of all Spiritual Truths, even of his Glorious Resurrection it self, only according as we shall lay hold on the Merits of, and be conformable to his Death. For so (among many other Scriptures to the like purpose) we read, *That if we have been planted together in the likeness of his Death; if so, and upon no other Terms, then we shall be also plant-* Rom. 6. 5. *ed in the likeness of his Resurrection.*

Wherefore in order to this, and to introduce, as at this Time, the Passion of Christ with the greater Solemnity, well did the Church Ordain, That the certain Period of our Regular Abstinence, and Repentance every Year, should immediately go before this particular Season; wisely judging, the severest Mortifications of our selves, to be the best Preparations for our Meeting worthily our Lord dying, and rising again for us; and that some more than ordinary Method of Zealous Piety, and Stricter Retirement from the World, was necessary to fit us duly for a Time, and Commemoration so Sacred.

Nay, farther yet, When the very Day of his dying did nearer approach,

to shew what ought to be the chief Matter of our Private Contemplations, as well as Publick Worship, during the whole Week preceding, (which has been therefore remarkably honour'd with the Venerable Name of *The Holy Week*,) has not our Excellent *Liturgy*, Day by Day, without Intermission, with a Succession of Divine Offices, the like not enjoin'd us in any other Week of the Year, continually repeated and inculcated on our Memories this one charming Truth, That *our Lord, our Love, was Crucified?* So that scarce any Thing else has all this while sounded in our Ears, in these Holy Places, but some one or other Step of our Saviour's sad, and dolorous Passage to the *Field of Blood*; till now at length we are brought thither, and to the very Day, when *He cried out, It is finished, and gave up the Ghost.*

St. John
19. 30.

We having been so lately conducted through this wholesome Course of Severities and Contritions, all teaching us to Die to Sin, as our Lord Died now for our Sins; I cannot but believe, that what had been else the proper Business of the Preacher on this Day, is already in great Part here done to my Hands; that You are all come hither tenderly affected

affected with a deep Sense, and melting Remorse, for what Christ suffered, as at this Time in our stead.

And if, by GOD's Grace, Your Hearts are thus already touch'd from above, then all that is left for me to do, will be only to assist You, not so much in raising, as in directing to the best Uses, Your Devout Affections already rais'd: To consult together with You, in the Fear of GOD, how all this Grief, and Sorrow, which so deservedly possesses Your Souls, may become a true Christian Grief, and Godly Sorrow; How by Degrees we may advance it into Spiritual Gratitude, Hope, Love, Zeal, and *Full Assurance of Faith*; and at last into *Joys unspeakable, and full of Glory*: Which, as sure as God is true, will come to pass in the Event, if we shall make his precious Death and Passion, not only the steady Object of our Belief and Admiration in those Parts of it, wherein we cannot imitate Him; but also of our unwearied Imitation, and constant Practice in those Things, wherein he left behind him *an Example*, for us to follow his Steps.

So you see it is, that my Text instructs us, in the only saving Way of Contemplating our dear Lord's Suffer-

ings; that we should consider them not only in themselves, and their Cruel and Lamentable Circumstances, but in their Gracious Ends, Influences and Powers: As Christ was the Person *Suffering*; as he *suffer'd so much*, and as he *suffer'd for us*: For us, as an unvaluable Ransom to atone GOD's Justice, that we may rely on it: For us, as an unblameable Original of Meekness, Holiness, Charity, and Resignation to the Will of GOD, that we may Copy after it.

In these few Words therefore, we behold our LORD's Passion display'd to our View, in its brightest Glory, its condescending Humility, its most obliging Endearments, and its principal Uses.

First, Its *Glory*, in that it was *Christ* who *suffer'd*; *Jesus the Christ, the Christ of God*, who is *Lord of all things, the Lord and Giver of Life*: That the same Person, who was Anointed a King to Govern the whole World, and Ordain'd a Prophet to Teach it, should be also Consecrated a Priest to Sacrifice for it, Himself being the *Oblation*.

St. Matth.
16. 20.
St. Luke
9. 10.

That is the Second, and was the Lowliness of His *Humility*; which is here styl'd His *Suffering*: Expressing, in one Word, His patient enduring all that Misery,

Misery, and Torment, which not only the Malice of wicked Men, or the Rage of Hell disappointed by Him, but the Wrath of GOD provoked, could inflict on Him, not in the least on His own Account, but only for our Sakes.

Which next follows, and is the most endearing Part of all, that *He suffer'd for us*; the Creator for the Creatures; *the Just for the Unjust*; the Judge for the Criminals: Yet *for us*, loaded with all this Weight of our Guilt, and with all these Just Causes of his Prejudice, he *suffered*, for our Justification, for our Salvation; but in the mean time, and in order to that, for our *Example*!

1 St. Peter
3. 18.

And lastly, The Excellency of *the Example*, he has left us to follow, is specified in such an eminent Instance, that *He did no Sin*, as would indeed make us utterly to despair of ever following it, were it not for his Grace strengthening us, his Mercy forgiving us, and his Spirit supporting us: All which he has faithfully promis'd, and *no Guile was ever found in his Mouth*.

Chap. 1.
Verse 22.

The first Particular in my Text, wherein the Grace of our LORD's Passion is magnifi'd, is, that the Person now suffering was *the Christ of God*.

I need

I need not here stay to enumerate distinctly the many High Prerogatives, and Glorious Appellations, which are heap'd on this great Person, as he was *the Christ*, throughout the Holy Scriptures; whereof He was *the Alpha*, and
 Rev. i. 8. *Omega*, *the Beginning*, and *the Ending*; first the Mystery, then the Manifestation; that to the Jewish Church under the Law; this to the whole World under the Gospel.

It may suffice, that all over this inspir'd Book, he is amply declar'd to be, what the Author to the *Hebrews* has Divinely contracted into few Words; *The Son of God*; *The only begotten of God*; *The Heir of all Things*; *The Lord of Glory*; *The very Brightness of his Father's Glory*; *The express Image of his Person*,
 Hebr. i. *full of Grace and Truth*, by whom He made *the Worlds*, *upholding all Things by the Word of his Power*: All unconceivably splendid, and triumphant Attributes; and all these directly tending to, and chiefly exercis'd in, our Pardon, and Peace. For so it presently follows,
 Verse 3. *that when by himself he had purged our Sins*, then and not till then, *He sat down on the Right Hand of the Majesty on High*.

This then was *the Christ*, appointed before all Time, coming in the Fulness of Time, sent from the Bosom of his Heavenly Father, by his Death to raise us from the Death of Sin ; whereof our first, and Temporal Death, was the fatal Consequence ; and our second Eternal Death, had been else the irreparable Punishment.

A Design this was of Pity and Compassion , whose *Height, Depth, Length and Breadth*, were so Incomprehensible, that nothing less could be sufficient, than an Infinite Wisdom to contrive it, and Power to effect it, and Love to accept of it.

By this one Adorable Counsel, Heaven and Earth, that were themselves so vastly distant, and whose Distance our Sins had widened so much more, were to be join'd, and for ever Reconciled : *Mercy and Truth were to meet together, Righteousness and Peace to kiss each other.* Psalm 85. There was to be an Atonement on the one Part, a Forgiveness on the other : Satisfaction was to be made by the Free Sufferings of a Man ; Salvation to be bestow'd by the Free Grace of GOD. Wherefore both Natures, the Human, and the Divine, were to be United in one *Christ*.

And

And since GOD was pleas'd to dignifie our Mortal Condition, so highly, by this near Conjunction, he made our Nature in his *Christ*, as Glorious, and Perfect, as it was capable to be.

The Preparations for his Appearance, the Signs that foretold him, the Wonders that made way for him, his Personal Perfections, his Teaching, his Actions, his Sufferings, did all exceed all Measures of Human Greatness or Benignity.

So Sacred was his Authority, that all other True Divine Teachers, from the beginning of the World to his Birth, though they had gone before him in the Flesh, yet received their Power, and Commission from him by the Spirit. Whatever Wonders they wrought, whatever Truths they taught, all was done, and spoken with Relation to him, and in Subservience to his Religion.

We know, that not only he himself, but even his Types, Forerunners, and Shadows, had many of them, the Privilege of working Miracles, the Gift of altering the common Course of Nature, and controuling the settled Laws of the Creation, as they pleas'd. The Prophets had it: *Moses* had it above all others. Yet they all had it only with Dependence

dance on him; and by a Title derived from him; as they were his Figures, Ministers, and Substitutes; to prepare, and enable the World, by Degree, to receive this *Great Mystery of Godliness*, ^{1 Tim. 3.} *God manifested in the Flesh*; This last, ^{16.} and universal Declaration of *Life*, and ^{2 Tim. 1.} *Immortality brought to Light in the Gospel* ^{10.} by Him, the Messias.

I know that Messias cometh, who is called Christ; and when he is come, he will teach us all things, said the Samaritan Woman in St. John the 4th, and Verse 25. And in the same Chapter said many of the Samaritans, *Now we have heard him ourselves, we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the World*, Verse 42. And the same St. John, who loved him most, and therefore probably knew him best, (for the greatest Love of GOD is the best Way to the greatest Knowledge of him.) *The Messias*, (says he) *is, being* ^{St. John} *interpreted, the Christ*: The very *Messias* ^{1. 41.} whom the Jewish Nation, all the Wise, Devout and Inspired Part of it; all the time it was a True Church, so earnestly expected, and desired; as he was to be afterwards also *the Desire of all Nations*.

They long before beheld him, though but darkly, in the Visions and Intimations to their Fathers, the Characters
and

and Inspirations of their Prophets, the Veils of their Ceremonies and Sacrifices, the Ornaments of their Temple, the Office of their *High Priests*; which were all, as the Law it self was, *only* *Colof. 2. 17.* *Shadows of good things to come*, whereof *Hebr. 10. 1.* *He was the Body*; they had all a borrowed Meaning, and Mystical End; they were all fixt on the Great *Messias*; by Him they were Illustrated; and in Him alone they were all Consummated.

By the United Expectation of the *Jews* all along, according to the Prophet *Daniel's* Prediction, and no doubt by a right Tradition, ancients than that, their *Messias* was to appear after the Captivity, and before the Destruction of their Temple and Nation. They themselves, just then when Christ came, did instantly, and every Moment, expect his Coming. All their Circumstances agreed in that Time: All their Descriptions concenter'd in his Person: All their Prophecies then gave over; the End of them all being in him once obtain'd. And that People has since had no more visible Communion with GOD, which had so much before.

Gen. 49. 10. *The Scepter was not to depart from Judah, nor a Law-Giver from between his Feet, till*

till Shiloh should come: The Scepter just then did depart from Judah: Their Temple was shortly after destroy'd; and their Nation irrecoverably hitherto scattered. Wherefore, this our Christ must Infallibly have been the same with their Shiloh, their Messias. He, Unto Verse 10. whom the gathering of the People was to be; He, towards whom all the Ancient Ages of GOD's Church before him did look forward, and upon whom all the Ages of it since have look'd back: The former Times to foretel him; the later Times to reveal him; both to Believe in, and to be Saved by him alone; for which End, and with Respect to him, all the Miseries and Joys of Eternity it self, are provided, and accordingly shall be dispens'd, to punish those that Reject him, to reward those that Obey him.

These, and whatever other such, magnificent Expressions of Excellency, the Holy Scriptures have attributed to our Lord, as he is *the Christ*, as they are all on the one Side, so many evident Testimonies of his *Eternal Power and Godhead*; so on the other, they ought to be esteemed as so many Marvellous Degrees, and Astonishing Amplifications of the Merciful Condescension of his Sufferings,

ferings, which is my next Particular. This very *Christ suffer'd.*

If any shall now inquire, from what Period of Time we may justly date the Beginning of his Passion; without all Question, his Sufferings took their Rise from the very first Moment of his Assuming our Flesh: Since for the Eternal Son of GOD only to become Man, was infinitely to suffer: That *He*, who
 Philip. 2. *was in the Form of GOD, and thought*
 6, 7. *it no Robbery, but his inviolable Right, to be equal with GOD, should be made of no Reputation, and take on him the Form of a Servant, and be made in the Likeness of Man.*

He was made in the Likeness of Man. Was not that an inexpressible Debasement of the Glories of his Divinity? But, as if that were not Obscurity, and Degradation enough, to that is added, his Stooping down to the low, and abject Form of a *Servant*. The great GOD of Heaven, who is otherwise *No Acceptor, or Respector of Persons among Men*, nor does he prefer the highest before the lowest, upon any Inequality of our Conditions here below; yet, when he himself was to put on our Humanity, he then became, as it were, an *Acceptor of Persons* on the other Side, and chose

A&S 10.
 34.
 Gal. 2. 6.

chose to appear in the vilest, and most despicable State among the Children of Men ; which is, that of a *Servant*, and the being *made of no Reputation*.

Thus, with his very taking our Nature, did his *Sufferings* begin ; and thence were continued through all the humble Circumstances of his Birth, and Kindred, and Conversation ; through a Life of Poverty, Simplicity, and Self-Denial ; and as the Evangelical Prophet describes him, *As a Man of Sorrows, acquainted with Grief ; despised and rejected of Men* : Till he came at length to that, which still deserves Emphatically to be call'd, *His Passion* ; when he was also *smitted of God, and afflicted*, to his dreadful Conflict with GOD, and himself in the Garden, and his Sweating Drops of Blood there ; to the Buffetings, the Revilings, the Scourges, the Spittings, *the contradiction of Sinners he endured* : The Cruel Insolency of his Enemies ; the fierce Rage of the Superstitious *Jews* ; the Tyrannous Scorn of the *Romans* ; the Thieves Crucified with him ; the Murderer preferr'd before him ; the Gall and Vinegar given him to Drink ; the Nails in his Hands ; the Spear in his Side ; the very August Name of King, objected to him in

Contempt; the Painful and Shameful Crown of Thorns put on his Head, with Ignominious Mockery: And at last, that inutterable Torment darted into his very Soul immediately from GOD himself, which compell'd him for a time almost to Despair, and to sink under its Weight. Sure we are, it made him cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

St. Matt.
27. 46.

In that black and dismal Moment of his expiring on the Cross, what insupportable *Suffering* must his have been, which could even appear to stagger such a Faith, and eclipse his Assurance of the Presence and Love of his *heavenly Father!*

Isai. 53.
6.

1 St. Pet.
2. 24.

How many Deaths, and extream Agonies of Death, must he then have felt! When, as the Prophet *Isaiah* says, *The Lord laid on him the Iniquity of us all:* And as *St. Peter* here expresses it, *He his own self bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree?* And not only ours, but the Sins of the whole World; since *St. Paul* has also taught us in his own Person, that every Sinner, as such, carries no less a Load about with him, than a whole *Body of Death!*

Rom. 7.
24.

Certainly the bare mention of our Lord's *thus-suffering*, though so plainly related,

related, could not but convince any indifferent and unconcern'd Person passing by, that *never any Sorrow was like his Sorrow*. But there is still something more behind, that methinks should never permit any of the Sons and Daughters of Men to pass it by as indifferent, and unconcern'd : And that is the Third Part of my Text ; He *suffer'd* all this for *us*.

For us he suffer'd. For himself he Rom. 6: could not die. *Death is the Wages of Sin* ; ^{23.} and *the Sting of Death is Sin*. Death ^{1 Cor. 15. 56.} could have no Dominion over him on that account : He *did no Sin*. But if any of us shall say so of our selves, *The Truth is not in us*. Wherefore *for us*, or which is all one, *for our Sins*, in our Place, *he suffer'd*.

All Sin must be acknowledg'd to be a Breach of the Wise, Holy, and Upright Law of GOD : And for every Breach of such a Law, a severe Punishment is due, unless some fitting Expiation be made. And that He only could have perform'd. Could any other Creatures for us ? Alas ! all their Value bears no Proportion to such a Forfeiture. However, such as they are, we had no Right to use them to that purpose, since GOD alone, not we, had the Propriety in them

before. Nor could we our selves have made an Equitable Satisfaction. Alas! Were it not for this Redeemer, we had wanted an Atonement, not only for our Iniquities, but for our best Righteousness.

Wherefore, seeing neither we our selves, nor any other for us, could contribute any just Price towards our Redemption; to whom could we have recourse? Whither should we flee for Refuge, but to that *one GOD, and one Mediator between GOD and Man, the Man Christ Jesus*? Flee to him we did not neither: Nor could we first; rather he sought us out, found, overtook us fleeing from him. In that deplorable Condition the *Good Samaritan had Compassion on us*, weltring in our Blood, in our Sins that required his Blood; *To bind up our Wounds, and heal our Bruises, and love us freely*: Freely it must have been, or not at all.

Thus *for us*, incompass'd with innumerable Frailties and Corruptions; contaminated with so many Pollutions of Original and Actual Sins; blacken'd with so many repeated Ingratitudes towards Heaven: *For us*, sinful Men. Men! sinful *Dust and Ashes; Worms, and no Men;* (for so the Scripture accounts of every Sinner;

1 Tim.
2. 5.

St. Luke
10. 33.

Hos. 14.

Psal. 22.
6.

Sinner ; condemns him to have lost the very common Privilege of being a Man ; which at best is no great Matter to boast of, as Man has made himself : For *Man* does but *walk in a vain Shadow*, whereas *Psal. 39.* Sin makes him worse than a Shadow ; *worse than the very Beasts that perish* ; and of Beasts the most contemptible, even a Worm of the Earth :) However, *for us*, in this dejected and depraved Condition, *Christ* undertook, *Christ* suffer'd : Not only became our Intercessor, our Pledge, our Ransom, our Surety ; but our Propitiatory Offering, our Bloody Sacrifice ; to atone *for us*, by undergoing *himself* the Divine Vengeance.

What shall we say then ? If our Lord's *Suffering* in this terrible Manner was able to shake the whole Frame of the Visible World, as it did ; if it could disorder the very Inanimate and Insensible Parts of it, though they were altogether Innocent of its Guilt : If it could rend the Veil of the Temple, and split the Rocks, and darken the Sun, and overspread the Face of the Earth with thick Darkness, and open the Graves, and make Dead Bodies arise, and walk abroad : What powerful Effect then ? And, what irresistible Influence should all this have upon us ? Who, in as much as we are all

Sinners, had but too great a Share in being the Causes of his thus *Suffering*.

What passionate Relentings, What vehement Desires, What fervent Longings, should the Remembrance of all this
 2 Cor. 7. excite in our Souls towards him? What
 11. Carefulness; yea, What clearing of our selves; yea, *What Indignation*; yea, *What Fear*; yea, *What Zeal*; yea, *What Revenge*, against Sin and Iniquity, that occasioned all This? What *Resolutions of better Obedience*, What Vigilancy, What Prayers, What Tears, What Vows for the future should it solemnly engage us in, against those our Transgressions, which cost him so Dear, no less than his Immaculate Blood, and weigh'd down for a Time, his Righteous Soul into Hell?

Thus *Christ Suffer'd for us*, to pay an Inestimable Price for our Demerits; and by his own Merits, to make us Sinners acceptable in the Sight of GOD, who
 Heb. 1. is of purer Eyes, than to behold Iniquity.
 13.

But, may we now safely conclude from hence, That the whole Design of our Redemption, was absolutely finish'd between GOD, and Him, and Us, meerly by *his Suffering for us*? Yes, entirely, as to the Meritorious Part of it: Though we should all beware of Negligence, or Presump-

sumption, on that Account: For there still remains enough to be done on our Part.

His Share was in Truth All in All, and All in every Part. It was compleatly to purchase Salvation for us. But then must begin, and then only can begin, our Share, which is still to *Work out that Salvation*. So that although all our Working can only proceed on the sure Foundation of his Purchase: Yet withal, it must indispensably proceed thereupon. And let us not be deceiv'd; if, as we are told, even our best *Working* in this Life, cannot be without some *Fear and Trembling*, What will our not Working at all be? Phil. 2. 12.

Consider, I beseech you. The Free Grace of our LORD's redeeming Mankind by his Blood, *The Blood of the New and Everlasting Covenant*, as large and diffusive as it is, yet can be of no Consequence to us in particular, but to aggravate our Condemnation for neglecting it, unless we not only Accept and Apprehend it by Faith, but Embrace and Cherish it with a Living Faith. And then Faith only lives in an Evangelical Sense, not only when it Breaths, and Professes, but when it Moves, and Works: Then it most Lives, when it Operates vigorously

gorously in a Conscientious Obedience to his Precepts, and a Diligent and Dutiful Conformity to his Example: Which is the Reason, my Text assigns, of our LORD's *Suffering for us*, that he might *leave us an Example*, and we should *follow his Steps*.

We know there are some, that call themselves Christians, who rejecting the great Fundamental Doctrine of our LORD's *Suffering for us*, as a Propitiatory Sacrifice, allow no other End of his Coming, and Living, and Dying in the Flesh, but that he might shew us the Way to Heaven, by his Teaching, and *Example*.

I need not, in this Audience, labour to confute this ; or to prove *Christ's* having been a Real Sacrifice, and the only sufficient Atonement for Sin, *by himself once offer'd* : Since in the whole Tenure of the Gospel, especially in *St. Paul's Epistles*, and that to the *Hebrews*, this Truth seems to be so perspicuously confirm'd. Only let me add, his being offer'd to GOD, as our Sacrifice, was a Thing so Necessary, that without it, in Vain had He been proposed to us, as our *Example* : Both these great Intentions of his Suffering, being so inseparably Mixt and United, that wherever they

Heb. 9.
28.

they shall be found divided, neither of them can be Effectual. *Christ* could never have been to us a Pattern of Holiness, such as we could have had the least Hope to follow, had he not also been a Propitiation for our Sins. And that Propitiation will prevail with the *Righteous Judge of all the World*, only for such, as, in some Degree or other, sincerely practise after his Pattern.

Upon no less, nor any other Conditions, has he undertaken to cleanse and rescue us from the Guilt and Slavery of our Sins, but only, as we shall strive to exercise that Capacity, which he has also obtain'd for us, of *following the Steps of his Graces*.

It must be Confess'd, without his Righteousness imputed to us, we can never be Justified in the Sight of God. And his Righteousness is never imputed to any, but only those, by whom either in Deed, or in Will, it is imitated. I say, not only in Deed, but in Will, because our Gracious God, who *worketh in us both to Will and to Do of his good Pleasure*, is sometimes pleas'd, *To accept the Will for the Deed*: But never so, as thereby to give us any Incouragement to come short of, or to omit the Deed.

Phil. 2.
13.

I say

I say then again, our Blessed LORD can never be a comfortable *Example*, but only to those, for whom He was a Sacrifice. And He never suffer'd effectually for any as a Sacrifice, but such as unfeignedly desire, and endeavour, to make Him their *Example*.

This being granted, that it highly concerns every one that *calls on the Name of Christ*, not only to trust in Him as our Redeemer, but to *follow his Steps* as our *Example*. It will next be very well worth our while to examine • carefully, where we may find an accurate Copy of that *Example*: In what Holy Ground we are to search, for the Genuine Marks of those Heavenly *Steps* we are to tread in.

For that, the Greek Word in my Text, which is translated *Example*, may suggest to us a certain Rule of Direction in this whole Matter. The Word is *ἡ προσημύων*, that is, such a Type, Prescript, and Original Draught, as is left us in Writing, whence we may transcribe it into our Lives.

So that you see, St. Peter was not content to leave us a meer uncertain hearsay, changeable, traditionary Doctrine of our Lord's Example; but such a One,

as being at first taken as near the Life as could be, was then written down, once for all finished, and *once delivered* St. Jude *to the Saints*. And indeed every Part of ^{v. 3.} it is demonstrably to be shewn in the Holy Word of GOD, which is our fix'd Standard of all Truth and Goodness, and, next to *Christ* and His Spirit, our only Infalible Guide of Faith and Manners.

This, says our Apostle, is the Example *He has left for us, for you to follow*: Consign'd it first into our Trust, and our Recording, who were Eye-witnesses of all; by us to be faithfully transmitted down to you, the Saints of all Ages to come. An Example most Holy, and most Worthy, both of our and your Imitation, in that *He did no Sin*.

So my Text proceeds to make out the Perfection of His *Example*. But here, alas! we must Stop. When *He took on Himself our other Infirmities*; yet, *Sin was excepted*. He was a spotless *Example* to us of Holiness: But such as we can never be to one another. 'Twere Blasphemy in us to imagine, that we can ever be Exempt from Sin in any Degree of Equality with him: Well were it for us, if we might be so, in some Degree of Resemblance to Him.

And

And let us not Despair. For that we may be, if we shall do what we are here advis'd, and what, through His Grace we may do: If we shall still have him in our View, and Write, and Speak, and Live after the perfect Copy of so great a Master; and stedfastly follow his Steps, though it be only, as his Friends and *Acquaintance* followed him to the **Luke 23.** Cross, *afar off*. However, if we shall **49.** keep his Example unmoveably before our Eyes, and perpetually strive to Walk answerably to it; then, whatever we shall Do, or Speak, or Think well, though very imperfectly, he will accept; and, where through Human Weakness we shall fail, he, out of the inexhaustible Riches of his own Mercy, will supply all the Good that is wanting, and Pardon all the Ill that remains.

An Example seems to be some visible Image, or sensible Pattern of something extraordinary in its kind; so exhibited to common Observation, that others may direct their Practice by it, and learn to excel in the same kind.

And great is the force of Examples: Great on both Sides; either in leading us to Good, or seducing us to Evil.

By

By common Experience, Examples are found to have far greater Influence on the Minds and Actions of Men, than the most Excellent Precepts singly deliver'd.

Examples have a Natural, Living, and Vigorous Efficacy, by Secret and Familiar Charms, they are generally wont to insinuate much farther, than the best Commands, or Intreaties, or Incouragements by themselves can reach.

Whilst the wisest Laws can only prescribe and require Obedience, by threatening Punishments, or promising Rewards, good Examples do more softly affect the Passions, and captivate the Imagination, and gently frame the Will to themselves: Convincing Mens Understandings, that the Good ought to be done by the bright Lustre attending all Goodness, when brought into Example; and also proving to our very Eyes and Senses, that it has been done by others, and therefore may be done by us, if it be not our own Fault; and shewing the easiest Method, and most graceful Manner of doing it.

Since therefore in all Things relating to Practice, Examples have so prevalent an Authority, much more than any other Way of Teaching; let me seriously

ously Recommend to you all, the *following* this most Consummate Pattern of *our Lord*, and the being made like to him, above all other Examples: A Duty so Incumbent on all Christians, that our very first Initiation into his Faith, our Baptism obliges us to it, as the distinguishing Badge and Character of our Holy Profession.

And let me assure you, Great, Happy, and Illustrious, would soon be the Benefits of such an imitating Christianity: Such as shall Teach us, in the first Place, most studiously to imitate *Christ* himself; and next him, his Disciples, Apostles, and first Companions, *To be followers of them*, according to St. Paul's Rule, concerning himself, *as they were of Christ*.

This would undoubtedly make us Disciples of Christ, according to his own Heart, who has declared himself to be not only the Truth, but *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*.

St. John
14. 6.

This would speedily take off our Minds from eager Disputes, and fierce Emulations; and employ them about plain and unquestionable Truths and Duties. This would quickly abate much of the vehement and tumultuous Spirit of Zeal, but increase the temperate Heat,
and

and useful Fire of it. This would soon allay and sweeten all that Sharpness, Sourness, and Peevishness of Conscience, which so generally prevails, and change it into a Conscience void of Offence towards God and Man. This would incline Men rather to be Innocent, and Holy themselves, by constant looking towards Him, who was so, than to find fault curiously, or to object subtly against others: Rather to be industrious in doing well, as He did, than to be critical in blaming what others do amiss.

This, in short, is the best Way to restore the Primitive Power of the Gospel, by restoring the Primitive Method of its wonderful Rise, Increase and Progress. This, in stead of making all Practice evaporate in Speculation, would more profitably reduce Speculation into Practice. This would bring Religion more into publick View and Notice, and by consequence more into Credit and Fashion. And whereas nothing can be a greater Scandal to any Church, than for the Members of it to be Rigid in their Censures of others, and yet loose in their own *Examples*; This would make the Loveliness of our *Examples* to correspond with, and even to adorn

adorn the Beauty of our Churches Doctrines and Precepts.

Give me leave to urge this yet farther, with a special Regard to You of this Place. For You thus indefatigably to Copy after this Blessed *Example* of our Lord *Christ*, were the certain Means for You to prove the greatest Blessings to the whole Nation wherein You live; that is, to become Good, as well as Great *Examples* to it: You I mean, many of whom GOD has placed in so high a Rank of Dignity and Honour in this World; that whether You will or no, whatever You do, Your Practice cannot but be a powerful *Example* to others.

Wherefore, in the Name of GOD, let us all raise up our Thoughts, and make our Imitation Aspire and Ascend
 Heb. 12. towards Him, who is the Author and Fi-
 2. nisher of our Faith; who has Ascended on High, and has led Captivity Captive, and has receiv'd Gifts for Men; yea, for the
 Psal. 68. *Rebellious* also; That the Lord God might
 18. not only teach us by his Doctrine, but dwell among us by his Example.

To this End, we all have, or may have in our Hands this Blessed Book of the New Testament of his Blood. Here only is to be found, St. Peter's *Exhortation*,
 the

the uncorrupt Original, and native Comeliness of his Holy Life and Death. Hence only let us take it, as from a pure and unmix'd Fountain. Let us often revolve in our Minds, and imprint deeply this unerring *Idea* of him on our Hearts. Let us incessantly Compare, Measure, Judge of, and Correct all our Thoughts, Words and Actions, according to the Exactness of this Model.

As we should always Adore, and Worship all his inimitable Praises and Perfections; so let us also imitate all his imitable Graces. Let us most imitate those of them, that are most fitted to our peculiar Conditions. So let us imitate them altogether, that our Zeal for some of them may not make us averse from any of the rest.

So let us observe his Mortifications, as not to neglect his Charity. Nor let our Love of his Communicative Goodness exclude our Observance of his severer Institutions. Rather let us carefully mingle them all in our Practice, as he did in his. As he did, let us harmoniously join the good Duties of Society with those of Retirement; the private Devotions of Solitude with the Distributive Virtues of Conversation.

A a

Thus,

Thus, in every Step of his irreprovable Life and Death, we shall not fail to meet with something Excellent, and most proper for us to trace out, and delineate in every Step of ours. When we find him in the Stable, or the Manger, have we not his great Humility? When in the Throngs, and Assemblies of the City, his Mild, Charitable, and Blameless Behaviour to set before our Eyes? When among Publicans and Sinners, his gentle Gravity, and winning Authority in reproofing Wickedness and Licentiousness: When with the Scribes and Pharisees, his avowed Contempt of proud Singularity, and censorious Hypocrisy: When in the Temple, his fervent Zeal: When in his Journeys by Sea or Land, his going about doing Good: When alone in the Wilderness, his unaffected Sanctity, and meek Severity: Every where we have his Innocency, his Temperance, his Modesty, his Affability, his Justice, his Mercy and Universal Beneficence.

But, as this Day most requires, since we have now seen him in his Agony in the Garden; in the Judgment-Hall Accus'd and Condemned; and thenceforth brought as a *Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before her Shearers is dumb, so opening*

not his Mouth; so meekly, either bearing the Cross himself; or Crucify'd on it: When he was Reviled, Reviling not again; ^{1 St. Pet.} When he Suffered, Threatning not; but ^{2. 23.} committing himself to him that judgeth Righteously: And since (according to the Words immediately foregoing my Text) This is acceptable to God; for even hereunto ^{Verf. 20,} were we called: Now particularly let us ^{21.} learn to imitate his Patience, Equanimity, and Long-Suffering; his forgiving Injuries, and loving Enemies; His Blessing them that Curs'd him; His Praying for them who Despitefully used him, and Persecuted him; and lastly, his entire Obedience to the Will of Heaven, express'd in that most admirable Word of Submission, amidst such ineffable Tortures, *Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.*

And if we shall thus follow his Gracious Steps to Mount Calvery, we shall also shortly follow him to Mount Olivet: If we shall thus be Partakers of his Death, by dying to Sin, we shall also be ^{Verf. 24.} Partakers of his Resurrection, by living to Righteousness here, to Glory hereafter: Which I beseech Almighty GOD to Grant us all. *Amen.*

5010

A
SERMON

Preached to the

NATIVES

OF THE

County of Dorset,

Residing in and about the Cities
of *London* and *Westminster*,

At *St. Mary Le Bow*, on Dec. 8. 1692.

Being the Day of their

Anniversary FEAST.

By *THOMAS SPRAT*, D.D.

Lord Bishop of *Rochester*, and Dean
of *Westminster*.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *John Nutt*, 1710.

SERMON

Preached to the

NATIVES

OF THE



Countess of

Residing in and about the City
of London and Westminster,

At St. Mary le Bow, on Dec. 8. 1832.

Being the Day of their

Anniversary FEAST.

By THOMAS STURGEON,
Lord Bishop of Rochester, and Dean
of Westminster.

Printed for John Hunt, 1710.

A
SERMON

PREACH'D

On the *Anniversary Feast* of
the NATIVES of the
County of Dorset, &c.

ACTS IV. Verse 32.

*And the Multitude of them that be-
lieved were of one Heart, and
one Soul: Neither said any of
them, that ought of the things
which he possessed was his own,
but they had all things common.*

IN the Second Chapter of this Book
of the *Acts*, there is represented to
us, as much as by Words a Thing
so Wonderful can be express'd,
the Glorious Manner of the first Mira-
culous

culous Descending of the *Holy Ghost*, on the Apostles, and Primitive Disciples.

A Miracle, that gave a Perfect Confirmation to all that had been done before, from the Creation to that Day, towards the Establishing of the True Religion; and also gave Authority to all that has been added since that Day, for the same End, on the same Foundation.

It clearly manifested to the World the Truth of the Christian Faith, and most visibly declared its Power: Fill'd the first Christians Mouths with new, unknown, unstudied Tongues; and to all those Tongues gave Utterance at once, to sound forth the Works and Praises of GOD: Whilst the Standers-by of all Nations all *marvelled*; and when every one heard his own Language, they were all *confounded*; as well they might, to find all Mankind now going to be united into one Church by the same extraordinary Way, by which they were at first scatter'd into many Nations, by a Multiplicity of Languages, and Variety of Speech.

After that first most astonishing Gift of Fiery and Cloven Tongues, we have next in the latter Part of the Second, and in the Third, and this Fourth Chapter,

ter, an Account of St. Peter's first Sermons to the People, who being come together out of all Countries to keep their *Pentecost* at *Jerusalem*, and there meeting with so unexpected an Event, were amazed to think *what it should mean*.

St. Peter tells them, This is that which GOD had foretold should come to pass *in the last Days*, that is, according to their understanding of those Words, in the Age of the *Messias*. And from thence he goes on to prove to them out of their Scriptures, that this *JESUS*, whom they had now *Crucified*, was the *Messias*, both *Lord and Christ*.

An Argument, which seem'd to require a long Search into the whole Design of their Ceremonial Law, and a deep Skill in all the Writings of their Prophets; that consisting all of dark Types, these being full of Mysteries: An Argument therefore, that might be thought fitter for their *Scribes*, and *Pharisees*, and most Learned Doctors, and the *High Priest* himself, than for an *Unlearned Galilean* and Ignorant Fisherman to undertake.

Yet this very Fisherman so manag'd this Weighty and Mystorious Subject; with such convincing Plainness, such Strength of Reason, as neither was nor could

could be taught by Art ; with such undoubted Evidence of Scripture and Antiquity ; such visible *Demonstration, and Power* ; that the Meaness of his Person, and Trade of Life, soon ceas'd to be an Objection and against him, was so far from less'ning his Authority, that it became an unanswerable Proof of the Divinity of his Doctrine, and the Reality of his Inspiration.

Wherefore these first Sermons of St. Peter had a present and surprizing Effect ; *Fear came upon the Soul of every Hearer ; Three Thousand Persons were at once added to the Church ;* the Multitude strove, who should first declare their Conversion, and Belief, and Desire to be Baptiz'd. And as fast as they came in, the New Converts were inspired with the same Gift of Tongues, by which they had been Converted.

Just before, they had been obstinate Unbelievers, perhaps Mockers of that Doctrine, whereof, just then in a Moment, they were compleatly furnish'd with Abilities to become Interpreters and Teachers to all Mankind.

In my Text, we have one remarkable Instance of the Blessed Spirit's coming down upon one of these first Assemblies
of

of Christians, in such a marvellous Manner and Measure.

In the Verse before 'tis said, That *when they had prayed, the Place, where they were met, was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.* And then strait follow three most signal Effects of this wondrous Dispensation.

First, That *they spake the Word of GOD with boldness*; without any farther Doubt in their own Minds, without any dread of Opposition from others, though the whole World was against them; with such an inspir'd Boldness, as became the Supernatural Commission, they had then received, to speak the Word of GOD; and a Boldness, that was justified by the Supernatural Works, which thenceforth accompanied their Speaking.

Secondly, That all the New Converts were of United Judgments and Affections. Not only the Apostles, but *the Multitude of them that believed, were of one Heart, and one Soul.*

Thirdly, That this inward Unity of *Heart and Soul*, was outwardly demonstrated by a free, and mutual Communication of their Temporal Goods, and Possessions. *None of them said, That ought*
of

of the things he possess'd was his own, but they had all things common.

Now of these three immediate Consequences of this admirable Revelation, the first, which was their *Speaking the Word of GOD with Boldness*, I shall pass by at this Time; and by GOD's Assistance, and your Patience, rather apply my self to the two last, as being more proper for the Occasion, and suitable to the End of this your Friendly, and Religious Meeting.

For the great Intention, My Beloved Countrymen, of your Assembling thus together in Publick Devotions, and Amicable Society, being, as you all profess, and, as I am verily perswaded, for the increase of Brotherly Love, and Good-Will among your selves here present, and to promote Charity towards those of our Country, who may be absent through Poverty; I, for my Part, know not how I can better perform the Task, your Kindness has laid upon me in this Solemnity, than by Recommending to your Devout Meditations, and, in some sort also, to your Pious Imitation, this great, and most Christian Example of the first Christians.

First,

First, Their Unanimity, and Concord;
They were all of one Heart, and one Soul.

Secondly, Their Liberal, and Generous Distribution of their Goods, to their Brethren that wanted; *None of them esteem'd any thing he had to be his own, but they had all things common.*

I begin with the first, *They were all of one Heart, and one Soul.* This is the first here in Order; and was indeed the Cause of the other. For how can there be a greater, or more powerful Motive to the outward Charity of Works, than internal Unity of Mind? Where the Goods of the Soul are entirely Communicated, it is almost impossible that there should be an absolute engrossing of the Goods of Fortune; so Men are wont to call them, though they are, in truth, the Gifts of Heaven, as well as the other; and as such, are to be distributed by the same Laws.

They were therefore all of *one Heart, and one Soul*; than which a nearer Agreement cannot be described, or imagin'd: The Heart (if there be any difference of the Expression in Scripture Language) being to be taken for the chief Seat of the Will and Affections, and the Soul of the Judgment and Understanding.
Nor

Nor was this only spoken of St. *Peter*, and the rest of the Twelve; nor only of the Apostles, and Seventy Disciples; nor only of the first Hundred and Twenty in the Upper Room; nor only of the Three Thousand Converted by one Sermon; but of All; of the Multitude of them that Believed.

Certainly some strange, and unusual Thing must needs happen, as here it did, that could bring together, and cement such a *Multitude*, so as to make them be of *one Heart*; that could perswade such a *Multitude* to converse together, and conspire in the same Thoughts, and Desires, as if they had but *one Soul*. Whereas a *Multitude*, however composed, too commonly seems by its inconstant, and fluctuating Counsels, its partial Debates, and perverse Opinions, and head-strong Resolutions, to have more Hearts, and more Souls than it really has; even more than it has Bodies.

In the Weakness, and Ignorance, or prejudicate Knowledge of a *Multitude*, how easily are the Seeds of Dissention and Contradiction sown? By the various Interests, or wilful Humours, or violent Passions of a *Multitude*, how quickly are they rais'd, and inflam'd? And when once a *Multitude* is engaged in Divisions,

visions, how hard a Thing it is to compose them again?

A *Multitude* therefore could never have been so united, had they not been a *Multitude* of Believers. Nor then neither, had not the Holy Ghost, the Blessed Author of all Peace and Truth, inclined them to it: Had not that taught them to make the Matter of their Belief to be the Cause, and Ground of their Concord, not of their Separation; as too often since has been experienc'd.

The Difficulty of so Divine a Work, to Unite a mixt *Multitude* of all People, and Languages, to Unite them so closely, to Animate them all with such Cordial Affections, did well become the Almighty Power of the Holy Spirit: It well became, and could only belong to that Blessed Person, who is one GOD, the same with the Father, and the Son, GOD Blessed for ever, to inspire so great a Degree of Union into the Minds of all, whom it fill'd with its first Gifts, and Graces, and Benedictions.

And, Beloved in our Lord and Saviour, this Heavenly Fruit of the Heavenly Spirit's being thus pour'd forth on the Primitive Christians, was not only intended, as some of the other Fruits of it were, to confirm our Faith; but also
to

to instruct us in one of our most necessary Duties.

The Apostles miraculous Acting, and Speaking, with such Invincible Freedom and Power, requires our Belief of the Faith that they Preach'd: And GOD took this Way to establish it: But that Marvellous Unanimity of their first Converts concerns our Practice, and was design'd to direct it.

It is not given us to follow them Step by Step in their other extraordinary Privileges and Prerogatives: But in their humble, and fraternal Condescensions to each other; their peaceable Acquiescence in the same Divine Truths; their meek Obedience to the same Holy Laws; in these we may, and ought to follow them.

The Glory of the Signs and Wonders which they wrought, was enough for GOD's Purpose in propagating the Gospel to all Times, and Places: But we of these latter Ages can never arrive at the same Abilities; nor ought we to emulate them in what was Peculiar to their Time, and Personal to Themselves. Whoever does, he is likely to shew more Proofs of his own Natural Vanity, or Spiritual Pride, than of any Supernatural Power, or Illumination.

Yet

Yet still it is left to us, and it is incumbent upon us, with the utmost of our Zeal, to imitate their other Virtues and Graces, which are, though of a lower Degree, yet of a Perpetual Duration for the Benefit of the Church : Such as their Simplicity of Heart, their Agreement in the same Acts of Piety, and their Consent in the same Christian Faith.

In those their more Exalted and Inspired Endowments, we must of necessity be Defective, since we cannot have any the least Proportion of their immediately Divine Helps to acquire them : And because those are not so necessary (indeed not at all necessary) in this common and settled Course of Christianity, as they were for the first Founding of it. But as for these their other good and gracious Dispositions, such as their Meekness, Self-denial, Patience, Long-suffering, Forbearance of each others Frailties, and Fellow-feeling of each others Infirmities; such as inclined them to this Unity of Heart, and Soul, and are all still equally necessary to us; towards our Attaining of these, we have still a sufficient Assistance from that *Father of Lights*, from whom they are derived.

Of all these, My Brethren, it was especially design'd that there should be a perpetual Succession deriv'd down on all, that succeed them in the same Faith. In these, they are to be our lasting Patterns to the End of the World. I mean, in this Mutual Concurrence and Conformity of Minds ; this Charitable Compliance of Judgments, and Endearment of Affections among our selves ; this mild, gentle, tender-hearted Temper towards all Men ; this submissive Uniformity in GOD's Worship : All of them Virtues, and Graces that exceedingly contribute to the very Being, much more to the Well-being of the Christian Church : All of them so peculiarly the Effects, and certain Influences of the Holy Ghost, that they are expressly call'd, *the Unity of the Spirit* ; and that, which is inseparably annex'd to it, *The Bond of Peace*.

Wherefore, in the Name of GOD, let us all fix our Eyes, and our Hearts on that uncorrupt Original, of the first Christians Agreement in sound Doctrine, and holy Worship, which was, as you have heard, the genuine, and immediate Off-spring of the true Spirit of GOD.

That

That most Christian Communion
which began so soon, so gloriously !
That most happy Word *Ὁμοθυμαδὸν* !
That most spiritual One Accord ! That
most desirable Unity of Heart and Soul !
which was most frequently and most
religiously enjoin'd all Christians, by
the Author and Finisher of our Faith !
And which took so effectually in them,
that were the first Publishers of it !
When they come to recommend it to
us, you see with what Vehemence they
do it : Beseeching us, *If there be any Con-*
solation in Christ, if any Comfort of Love, if
any Fellowship of the Spirit, if any Bowels
of Mercies, Fulfil ye my Joy, saith the A-
postle, Phil. 2. 1. That you be like-minded,
having the same Love, being of one Accord,
of one Mind.

And when they come to use Argu-
ments for it, you see how they press us
all the Ways that can be thought of, to
make it enter into our Souls ; how they
oblige us to it, by all the Considerations
of Duty, of Assistance, of Interest, of
Benefit, and Reward : How they farther
engage us, by many most weighty Argu-
ments drawn from the very Substance,
and End, of our pure and undefiled Re-
ligion : By the Unity of our Baptism
into one Faith ; of our Hope, which is

one happy Eternal Life ; of our Head, which is one Lord Christ ; of his Body, which is one Church, the Mother of us all ; and of that common Sense, and mutual Participation of Helps, Affections, and Comforts, that ought for ever to be maintain'd between all the Children of such a Mother, all the Members of such a Body.

You see how we are all provok'd to Love, and bound, in our several Stations, to labour for a Spiritual Unity, by all these, and other such unanswerable Grounds of Persuasion. But that which especially sets it home to us, is this, That we see the Duty is practicable, we see it lively set forth in that blessed Model which is given us in this Fourth, and in the Second Chapter of this Book : It gives us the most perfect Example of Unanimity, that ever was shewn to the World.

And that we may follow it as we ought, it behoves us to consider which way the First Christians came into this State, that we may take the same, as far as we can in our Circumstances.

We see then, how when all the Apostles of Christ, and all our Lord's own Disciples, attended the fulfilling of his own great Promise of sending the Holy Ghost,

Ghost, to Comfort them, and to Teach them all Things ; to Teach them, and as a Comforter to Teach them ; to join with the Precepts, and Counsels of a Teacher, the Gentleness and Favours of a Comforter ; then the chief Account we have of them, in Preparation to all this, is, That *they were all with one accord in one place* : When that Promise was accomplish'd, when the Holy Ghost was sent, the next Account we have of them is, that *They were all of one Heart, and one Soul.*

Observe, I beseech you, in that first General Meeting of the whole Church, than which never any since was more Venerable, nor will be, till the Last Day of General Judgment ; when the Blessed Spirit of *G O D* did not only hover above over all their Heads, as he did over the Waters at the Creation ; from whence all the Order and Beauty of all the Creatures proceeded ; but sate upon each of their Heads, and over-spread their Minds, and enlarged their Hearts, and loosen'd their Tongues, to the Amazement of all Beholders, who thereby soon became Converts : There was then no one Circumstance, that more advantageously contributed to their Universal Receiving of that Divine Revelation, than that they were all united,

with one accord, in one place : There was no one Consequence of that Revelation, which the same Holy Ghost thought fitter, and more instructive, to be everlastingly recorded in Scripture, than that afterwards they all remain'd united in Doctrine, in Devotions, in Charity: There are no other Principles or Practices here mention'd upon which they united, but such as were truly Evangelical, and tend directly to the uniting of the Mystical Body of Christ to the end of the World.

They continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine, in Fellowship, in Breaking of Bread, and in Prayers. They continued daily with one accord in the Temple, and Breaking Bread from House to House, or in the House, that is, in part of the Temple also, or in the several Houses at Jerusalem, where the Apostles had their Congregations: There they did eat their Meat, that is, their Spiritual Food in the Holy Communion, and also their Natural, but Sanctifi'd Meat in their Feasts of Charity; and did all this with Gladness, and Singleness of Heart, praising GOD, who had called them to that Excellent Way of Life, and graciously accepted them in it, and gave them a publick Testimony of all this, in the Favour of all the People.
What

What could be done more towards uniting their *Hearts*, and *Souls*? After they had Repented, and were Baptized, and were filled with Grace, and Power from on high, First, they continued in the Apostles Doctrine; in that, and no other. They receiv'd the Word with all readiness of Mind, and search'd the Scriptures, whether those things were so. Having found the Truth, they stedfastly adher'd to it without Wavering and Uncertainty; whatsoever Inquiry they made into it, it was without any needless Curiosity, or over-subtil Inventions about it.

Secondly, They continued in Fellowship; that is, either in a strict Communion of all the Offices of Christianity in general, or, as the Learned Dr. Hammond understands the Word Κοινωνία, in a Charitable Communication of their good Things to those that wanted.

Thirdly, They continued together in Breaking of Bread; that is, in the frequent Participation of the Blessed Mystery of the Lord's Supper: One Part, the Breaking of Bread, being here, as Drinking is elsewhere, [1 Cor. 12. 13.] put to signify that whole Sacrament, though never in Scripture was any one kind of it commanded

manded to be Administred in stead of the whole, as in the Church of *Rome* is most Sacrilegiously practised.

But in the due and constant receiving that Holy Sacrament, in both Kinds, no doubt, they all *continued* : That most Sacred Ordinance, which is, or should be so much the great Instrument of Unity among Christians, that it is most properly termed the Communion.

Fourthly, After they had thus *broken* that Heavenly *Bread* ; and *eaten their Meat*, their Bodily Meat probably in their Charitable Feasts, what follow'd but *Gladness, and Singleness of Heart* ? *Gladness*, the sure Companion, at least in the End, of a *single* innocent Heart, endued with true Christian Simplicity ; as Darknes and Discomfort is the never-failing Attendant, one Time or other, first or last, of a double deceitful Mind, and Hypocritical Spirit.

Lastly, They continued *daily with one accord, in the Temple, praising G O D*. Though the Lord from on High had visited them with the most gracious Dispensation, that ever was revealed from Heaven ; yet, notwithstanding that extraordinary Effusion of the Holy Ghost upon them,

them, they never intermitted, but exactly observ'd the ordinary Course of their Religious Duties.

And for this, they resorted *daily* to the *Temple*: Which though they consider'd now as having lost all its Typical Sanctity, by the renting of the Veil at the Death of Christ; yet, as Christ himself taught them immediately before his Death, they look'd upon it as being still GOD's House by Consecration, and as being a *House of Prayer for all Nations*.

Thus even at that very Time, when they had receiv'd the Blessed Spirit in so abundant a Measure; yet from that so bright an Inspiration, they took not any Opportunity, nor framed any Pretence to condemn, or despise the common Offices of the Church, or to think themselves above all the prescribed Ordinances of their wonted Worship; but therefore, the rather, they frequented the Service of GOD, according to their accustomed Manner.

They continued *daily*, to shew the unwearied Fervour, and stated Regularity of their Piety. They continued *daily with one accord*, to signify the Harmonious Agreement of their Spiritual Society. They continued *daily with one Accord*

Accord in the *Temple*, to testify their Preference of Establish'd, Consecrated Places, and their Observance of orderly Decency in their Devotions.

Nor did they only there continue in Prayer, in Petitioning Heaven for Benefits to come, but in *Praising GOD* for Mercies receiv'd: Which is the Noblest, the most Sublime, the most Cœlestial Part of Christian Worship; as being indeed the chief Business of Heaven it self.

And if there be any Communion of Saints, which we must believe, or utterly renounce one Article of our Creed; if any such Thing, as a Holy Catholick Church, whereof surely the proud Boastings, and false Pretences of *Rome* cannot wholly Abolish the Thing it self; then there is no manner of Question, but the largest Measures of Grace will be Communicated to our Souls, in these Publick Offices of *Prayer*, and *Praise*, which at once, as the whole Primitive Church did then, so a considerable Part of it now, with united Tongues, and Affections, and Spirits more united, presents to the Throne of Grace.

That is the First Part of my Text;
The Multitude of them that believed were all
of

of one Heart, and one Soul, in this Sense, and to this Degree, and in the Uniform Performance of all these Spiritual Duties.

Now, My Brethren, upon this so intimate an Agreement of their Understandings, Wills, and Affections in Matters of Faith, and Worship, there presently succeeded a like Harmony of Good Works : They all practis'd a general Distribution, and Participation of each others earthly Riches and Possessions : Which is the last Effect here mention'd of their being all *filled with the Holy Ghost*. *None of them said that ought he possessed was his own, but they had all things common.*

They were really their own Things, as much as any other Mens Goods were theirs : But their new Principle of Christian Charity had made them to alter their Thoughts so much about them, as even to change, and transfer the very Propriety of them.

It cannot indeed be denied, but of such an extraordinary more than Brotherly Love, and strict Fellowship, as this of the Apostles, and Primitive Disciples, there had before some Shadows and Footsteps appear'd in the Practice
of

of some Men of other Religions, both among the Jews and the Gentiles.

Among the Jews, such a Communication of all Things was, in great part, used by that Sect which they call'd *Esfens*, towards Men of their own Way of Discipline. And a Generation of Men they were, who, of all others, came nearest the Christian Institution: So that, as *Grotius* tells us, our Lord had many of his first Disciples out of the Men of that Profession: For which Reason probably, as he observes, they alone were seldom or never reprehended by our Saviour himself, as all the other Sects were very frequently, and sometimes exceeding sharply.

Such a Communication also was, in some sort, in use among the *Pythagoreans*, and some other Fraternities of the Heathen Philosophers, and some of their wisest Politics of Civil Society: Whose chief Aim being the Advancement of Humane Nature by all Natural Means; and they believing they could not do that by any better Way, than by raising Friendship to the highest Pitch; which they justly esteem'd the most perfect Natural State of Mankind, in this World: They therefore Cultivated especially that kind of Friendly Life, which they
called

called Κοινότητα, that signifies the same with the Phrase in my Text, of having *all things common*.

But notwithstanding all this, it were easy to prove, that of all the Communities of Goods, which have been ever essay'd among Men; this of the Apostles, and first Christians, was the most Excellent, the most Innocent, the most Spiritual, and sincerely Charitable Kind of it.

As for that Sect of the Jews, though they did bountifully dispense their Estates in common to Men of their own Party, and Form of Life; yet we do not find, but the same Men still retained something of the general Temper of the Jewish Nation; which was, to be kind only to themselves, and their Profelytes, but rigid, and hard-hearted to all the World besides; especially to all that differ'd from them in Religion.

So that in Truth, the Divine Efficacy of the Christian Faith, in its first Beginnings, was scarce ever more illustrated in any Thing than in this, that it first undertook to Convince the Jews; and could bring so many of them so speedily from the most stiff-necked Arrogance, and narrow-handed Austerity, to the greatest Humility and Generosity,

sity, that ever Mankind was acquainted with.

For as for the Heathens also, who profess'd to hold such a Community of all Things ; they generally went so far in the Abuse of it, as to lay all Things common ; not only lawful, but unlawful Things too ; even some of those Things, which, by the Laws of GOD and of Nations, had been made most proper, and peculiar. But in such Things, the greater the Community, the greater the Wickedness.

Whereas this Evangelical Community here instituted in the Primitive Church, had all the quite contrary Advantages, and Perfections.

First, It was most Pure, Spotless, and Unblameable. It was only a Communication of lawful Things ; and of such Things as might lawfully be used in *common*. But all *Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darknes*, all Imagination of partaking in unlawful Things, they universally condemned ; and their Practice was accordingly. They restrained themselves, and taught us, to *abstain* not only from the real Guilt, but from *the very Appearance of Evil*. They utterly abhorred the least Supicion of Licentiousness, under

under a Pretence of Christian Freedom : They knew, that although through Christ they were *free indeed*, yet he had redeem'd them only from the Burden of Legal Observances, and not from the Obligation of Moral, or Natural Laws.

Secondly, As their Liberal Distribution of their Temporal Inheritances, for the Relief of those among them, that wanted, did flow from the most Divine Principle of Christian Love, and Tenderness towards all their Brethren of the same Faith, and Communion ; so it was at the same Time accompanied with an unconfin'd Good-will, an open-hearted Kindness, and enlarged Bowels of Compassion, to all Mankind besides. What St. Paul exhorted all Christians to do, they perform'd in an Eminent Degree: *As they had Opportunity, they did good to all Men ; though they did it chiefly to those of the Household of Faith.*

And that indeed is the true Christian Charity. It may have its Degrees ; but never admits of its Contraries : So that all, who are sincerely thus affected, may express their Charity to some more than to others ; but must never be Uncharitable, much less Unjust, to any.

To

To all we are bound to practise a perpetual Communication of our good Will, and good Offices, and of our Goods too in the Works of Justice, and Charity: In the Works of Charity, according to our Capacities; in the Works of Justice, always, and without Reserve. For only the Able can be Charitable: And it may not sometimes be a Man's own Fault, that he is not able to be outwardly Charitable: But it is ever a Man's own Fault only, if he is not outwardly Just, and at least inwardly Charitable to all.

Thirdly, This free dispensing of their Goods and Possessions, that was then made by the Able to sustain the Unable and Afflicted, was far from being intended to cherish the Laziness, or to encourage the Negligence, or to nourish the Vanity and Pride of any that were thus relieved; but to quite contrary Purposes: That is, either to supply the real Wants of the innocently Neccessitous; or to comfort those, that were under fierce Persecutions; or to excite those to indefatigable Industry, who were to labour in the Work of the Lord; that with more Leasure, and Freedom from worldly Cares, and Diversions, they might attend the most important Business of saving

ving Souls, and spreading the *Everlasting Gospel*.

These, My Brethren, were the only, or the principal Ends of the first Christians having *all things common* : Ends very different from those of the Monastical Life, as it has been universally abused in all Christendom: Though that pretends to come nearest the first Christians Retirement from the World, and free partaking of what each other possessed, and living their Life in *common*.

But towards the imitating of that Humble, Devout, and Self-denying Life of the Apostles, and their Disciples, it is not sufficient for Men, or Women, only to profess a sullen Reservedness, or unprofitable Separation from the World : For some Persons, in shew of a more Spiritual Life, to live idly upon others mistaken Charity, is not to practise the Primitive Community of Goods. Whoever will be really like those great Examples of Self-denial and Abstinence, 'tis not enough only to follow them superstitiously, and servilely, in some one little accidental Thing, some indifferent Habit, or Action of their Lives : Rather we must endeavour to resemble them in their real Virtues, and solid Excellencies, and in carrying on the Work of GOD,

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by

by doing all the Good we can in this World, as they did.

Fourthly, It is observable, that of the Goods and Estates of the first Christians, thus brought as Free-Will-Offerings into one Common Treasury, the Disposition was ordered with great Prudence, Equity, and Piety ; and that at first, by no less Men than the Apostles themselves ; afterwards indeed it was committed to inferior Ministers, but still at the Appointment, and under the Inspection of the Apostles. In this Chapter it is said, *That as many as were possessed of Land, or Houses, sold them, and brought the Prices of the Things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles Feet ; and Distribution was made to every Man according as he had need ; so that there was none among them that lacked.*

Behold, I pray. As that was the first General Purse (if I may so call it) of Christian Charity, that ever was raised by the Power of the Christian Faith, so the careful directing of it was an Employment worthy of the Apostolical Office it self, and becoming their High Dignity, and Super-eminent Station in the Church of GOD.

For the very Apostles Discharge of their Duty, it was not sufficient, that
with

with great Power they gave Witness of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus : Nor was it enough for them to Baptize Men into, and Confirm them in his Faith ; nor by Exhortation, to Rouze and Awaken the Drowzy World ; nor by Reproof to Chastise, and Admonish the Stubborn and Negligent ; nor by seasonable Counsels and Comforts, to Strengthen the Doubtful, and Refresh the Weak : But by a constant giving their own, according to their Abilities, and by a diligent Collection of others Alms-deeds, and by a wise Administration of both, they became the first Publick Almoners of the whole Christian World.

You see, in a Time when the whole Christian Church was in a State of outward Poverty, and Misery, that was undoubtedly one of the most Christian Offices then, to relieve the Indigent, to comfort the Distressed, to provide for the Widows, Orphans, Captives, Aged, and Infirm. And certainly therefore, the like Deeds of Mercy and Piety ought never to have a less Esteem among all Christians to the End of the World : Especially in Times of the Churches Prosperity.

However, this we are sure of, so highly did the first Planters of Christianity, in
C c 2 *their*

their Time, value such common Works of Compassion and Bounty, performed in a right Evangelical Method.

And indeed it is wonderful to consider, almost incredible to tell, how great Advantages the Gospel obtained, in its first setting forth, by the Merciful, Charitable, and Hospitable Conversation of its first Professors: When the World beheld Men so despicable in their outward Condition, yet Enobled and Adorned with all that Lustre of Spiritual Gifts: When Men saw them so ambitious of another World; so unconcern'd for this; so not in the least desirous of what was other Mens, so Generous in what was their own; using their own Things so moderately themselves, as if they had belonged to others; only shewing them to be their own, by their Readiness of giving them to others: When Men saw Things, so much above the common Rate of Human Nature, produced in these Men; and that only by their being Christians, they could not but have a high Esteem of that Excellent Religion; they could not but be strongly inclined to embrace it themselves.

You have heard, that the Reasons here assign'd why the first Christians had so soon *the Favour of all the People*, were prin
prin

principally three. The first, That *they went about from House to House, eating their Meat with Gladness, and Singleness of Heart*: There is their innocent Hospitality, and their right Use of the true Christian Liberty in that Particular. The second, That all, who believ'd, *continued together, with one accord, in Prayers and Praising GOD*: There is their publick owning of Religion, and Zeal for GOD's Worship. The third, That *they sold their Goods and Possessions, and distributed them to all Men, as every Man had need*: There is the Universal Extent of their Charity.

And for this last Cause chiefly it was, that *they had the Favour of all the People*; as the afore-mention'd Excellent Interpreter conceives. It is the Doing of Works of Liberality, and Bounty in the sight of all the People, that most naturally gains their Favour and Affections. Of all Religious Actions, none are more Praise-worthy, or Amiable, none more acceptable to GOD and Men, than the visible Works of Mercy and Piety; such as are freely and bountifully bestowed, either for the Service, Comeliness, and Honour of GOD's Worship in his Temples; or for Refreshing the Minds, and Feeding, Cloathing, and Relieving the

Bodies of the Poor and Needy, which are his Temples also.

And, My Brethren, this their abundant Goodness and Benignity, this Sweet-smelling Sacrifice to GOD, this most delectable Savour among Men, this best-hallowed Incense that ever was seen on Earth, or rose up towards Heaven, continued to Adorn, and Perfume the whole Christian Name for several Ages, their irreconcilable Enemies themselves being Witnesses.

It is very memorable that they had the forced Applause, and envious Praise of *Julian* the Apostate himself in this Particular. For in an Epistle which he wrote to one of his chief Heathen Priests, wherein he earnestly exhorted him, and all his Idolatrous Brethren, to oppose the powerful Progress of the Gospel for the future, by better, wiser, and more Virtuous Arts than hitherto they had done; and to attempt the Subversion of Christianity by copying after the Christians themselves, in those very Methods, by which it had grown so formidable to their false Gods; He more especially by Name Recommended two or three of those Laudable Practices among Christians to their Studious Imitation.

One was, Their Integrity and Sanctimony of Life in general: Another, Their decent Ceremonies, and comely Rites in the Interrment of their Dead: A third, *Their Humanity and Charity to the Afflicted, though Strangers to them;* which, as he goes on, *is so remarkable, that the Impious Galileans,* (a Name with which he was wont to reproach the first Christians, and our Lord Christ himself) *these very Impious Galileans,* says he, *do not only maintain, and support their own Poor, but ours also.* A plain Confession in Commendation of the first Christians Beneficence, extorted by the Force of Truth, from the spitefully impious Pen of the Apostate himself.

And in this Blessed State, the Christian Church in great Part remained through all its first, purest, and most disinterested Ages; till the World, the Secular Empire, the Pleasures, the Riches, and Vanities of it, were let in upon it.

But till then, with the same Cœlestial Arms of Genuine Doctrine at first deliver'd, and the same prevailing Power of Miraculous Works at first bestowed, they Converted or Confounded their Enemies: And at the same Time, with the same joint, though slender, Stock of Earthly Goods religiously disposed, they

supported each others, and, in some Measure, their Adversaries Necessities, and happily supply'd their own Want of Earthly Power.

So they lived, as looking on themselves to be Parts of the same Christian Family, Children of the same Heavenly Father, Members of the same Spiritual Body ; and took Care of, and commiserated and sympathized with each other accordingly ; seeming, as if they had all the same Desires, the same Grievs, the same Joys, the same Interests in this World as well as the future ; having *all things common to all*, as if (which I can never too often repeat) *they were all of one Heart, and one Soul.*

Their chief *Treasure* they laid up in *Heaven*, where neither *Moth* can corrupt, nor *Thieves* break through and steal. And whatever *Treasure* any of them had upon Earth, they quickly placed that out of the Reach of the *Moths* corrupting, or the *Thieves* stealing, not laying it up, but by scattering it abroad into many Hands, and putting it out to the best Use.

Thus they made their Temporal Riches to be to them as the Gate of Heaven ; which, GOD knows, have been to many since, that call themselves Christians too,

as the Gate of Hell. They little cared, or rather they very much cared, how *common* they made their fading Wealth, their corruptible, and corrupting Abundance of this World's Goods; since by the Fundamental Privileges of their holy Profession. they had so many other, so many greater Things *in common*: One common Faith in one common Creator, Redeemer, and Comforter; one Communion of Saints; one Hope of the common Salvation.

By these irresistible Ways, and Instruments, My Beloved Brethren, was the Lord pleas'd to found and amplify the Christian Church; and thereby to *add daily to it great Numbers of such as should be saved*. Whatever now of all this is absolutely inimitable, and never to be copied after by us, either by Reason of the Distance of Times and Places; or Customs of Nations changed; or Diversity of Gifts in several Ages; or the different State of Christianity in this Age; all that should be the Subject of our Belief, our Wonder, and our Praise.

But whatever of it is imitable, and may again be applied to our Circumstances, that we should make the Object of our Zealous Studies, and Devout Emulations.

'Tis

'Tis granted, we are not now obliged to that their first Way of Conversation, when *none among them called any thing his own, but they had all things common.* Now, the *Blessings of this Life*, we possess, we may innocently enjoy, as our own Property, quite distinct from the Rights of other Men to it, as their Rights are distinguished from ours. But withal, we must be mindful, that still in respect to GOD, we are all only Tenants, and Usufructuaries: He alone is the true Proprietor, and sole Lord of all: Though for our Comfort and Encouragement, He, in his infinite Mercy, has declared, That what Part or Portion soever of it we distribute in a right Manner, to whomsoever it be, if even to those, to whom Nature, or Laws, or Custom obliges us to be Kind and Merciful, if we give it to them for his sake, that he accepts, as return'd and paid to himself.

You have been told, that all lawful Things were made common to the first Christians for that particular Time. But now all Things are again become peculiar and several, and seem to return to their old Boundaries of *Meum, & Tuum*, with us as with the rest of Mankind; and 'twere well indeed, if those Bounds were universally observ'd. Yet still I must say, that

that among Christians, such as are so indeed, and not only in Name, some Part of those Things, which are most a Man's own, are to be so dispensed, and dispersed to others, to so many others, by so many Titles, that at last it can only be just said, What is a Christian's own, is not *common* to all.

As we are Christians, we are all engaged to shew some Effects of our Kindness and Charity to all, that are in Want, as they are Christians; to all in extream Want, as they are Men; even to Strangers and Aliens; nay to Enemies and Persecutors: Much more to all Friends and Kinsmen, all Neighbours and Countrymen.

And that indeed, My Dear Countrymen, has been the chief Aim of this latter Part of my whole Discourse, as I question not but it is the great Purpose and Design of your present Assembly.

No Man can deny, but as to the Country, whence we all have sprung, *our Lot* has fallen to be born in a *Pleasant*, and *Fruitful Place*: And I am confident, many that hear me this Day, have there also a *goodly Inheritance*; and many, if not there, I am sure have elsewhere: And you know the old Gospel-Rule, *To whom much is given, of them much is required.*

To

To such of you therefore, give me Leave to conclude my Speech : And in the Name, and by the Bowels of our Lord Jesus Christ, I exhort you, as Fellow-feeling Members of the same Mystical Body ; as Members also of the same Political Body and Country, to extend your Pious and Charitable Assistance towards the Distressed and Indigent Natives of the same Country : Now especially on this your Solemn *Feast-Day* ; that when you shall *Eat your Meat with Gladness*, they may not be quite empty and disconsolate.

I must tell you, Charity is the best Companion of all Publick Feasting : It is the best, and most Christian Argument to recommend it ; I had almost said, to justify it. Certain it is, that was the chief Reason, for which the Primitive Christians allowed of Feasting at all ; their Feasts being therefore, as I have already said, peculiarly styled *Feasts of Charity*.

Consider then, I beseech you, though GOD does not now expect from you to make all your Goods common to others as largely as they did ; yet still he calls upon you in your Proportion, to communicate to others of your Goods, as kindly, if possible, as they did.

Their Community of all Things properly

perly belong'd to them, as they were the first Christians. But the Example of their diffusive Charity obliges you, if you will be Christians; if you will be *Followers* of them, *as they were of Christ*, who gave himself for you, for this very Reason, that you should approve your selves to be his *peculiar People*, by being *zealous of Good Works*.

'Tis true, GOD now permits every Man's Estate to be his own, according to the Laws of his Country: But still some good Part of it is always, and upon some Occasions, all of it is subject to the Laws of Christianity: And the more GOD suffers it to be ours, ought not we, in return, the more to make it his?

Nay, let us remember, that our Temporal perishing Goods and Riches are then most our own, when we most distribute them as GOD commands. Then, and then only, if GOD says true, we shall really enjoy, and improve the best Way, and bring a lasting Blessing on what we keep to our selves. And for what we thus part with, GOD will recompence an Hundred-fold into our Bosoms; of Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost in this World; of *Joys unspeakable and full of Glory in the World to come.* AMEN.

FINIS.

12 JY 62

A
SERMON
Preached before the
King and Queen,
AT
WHITEHALL,
On Good-Friday, April 6. 1694.

By THOMAS SPRAT, D.D.
Lord Bishop of Rochester, and Dean
of Westminster.

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SERMON

Preached before the
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St. MATTH. VII. 21.

*Not every one that saith unto me,
Lord, Lord, shall enter into the
Kingdom of Heaven; but he that
doeth the Will of my Father which
is in Heaven.*

NEvertheless not as I will, but as
thou wilt, Not my Will, but thine
be done, were the meek and
tender Words of entire Resig-
nation to the Will of his Heavenly Fa-
ther,

ther, which the great Saviour of the World used, just after he had prayed, that this Day's bitter *Cup might be removed from him*; whilst *his Soul was exceeding sorrowful even to Death* in his dreadful Agony in the Garden; when he was immediately entring on the severest Part of his dolorous Passion, going to encounter the utmost Rage of his Enemies, both wicked Men and Devils, to endure the Denial and Treachery of his Friends, nay the Accursed Death of the Cross it self: and all this only for our Sakes; as *on him were laid the Iniquities of us all.*

Towards our right entertaining of which inexpressible Love, endeared to us by so many Circumstances of Mercy, increased by so many Degrees of Humility in him, and Unworthiness in us, and now so nearly approaching us in the very Hour; What is the best Preparation that we can make? What the most beneficial Use of it? What kind of Gratitude, though none can be equal to it; Yet what is fittest for us to return for it? What is, or can it be other than this, that we also, on our Part, should endeavour to *do the Will of his, and our Father which is in Heaven?*

To this Purpose, if we will take the Advice of this Saviour himself; And whose can we better take, either considering his Wisdom or Goodness? For which *his Name was Wonderful, Counsel-Isa. 9. 6. lor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace*: If we will hearken to his Counsel, he frequently admonishes us, that it is this he expects from us, this he requires of us, for all he had done, and suffer'd for us; which was so much, as would have been to any other, either Man or Angel, insupportable.

Particularly here in my Text, he expressly tells us, that, for all this, he demands of us not only *our saying to him Lord*, our open professing of his Doctrine, tho' that without question; nay, as we shall find, not only our believing him to be the Lord, the Great Messias, tho' that too, and that much more than the other: but our serious Submission to all his Divine Precepts; our sincere performing what he has injoin'd, and enabled us to perform, his holy, and just Commands; our *crucifying* what he has taught us to *crucifie*, our own Wills, and Lusts; our trusting, and not only our trusting to his Death, and Resurrection, but our *being made Conformable to*

D d 2

them

them by dying to Sin, and rising to Newness of Life. All which in other Words is no more, nor no less, than our doing the Will of his Heavenly Father: For this, 1 Theff. 4. 3. says St. Paul, is the Will of God, even your Sanctification.

In the 6th of St. Luke, the like Sense as this in my Text is express'd by Way Verse 46. of Question, and Reproof; *Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the Things which I say?*

In which two Parallel Scriptures, first, that which is to be done is styled in St. Matthew, the Will of my Father, in St. Luke, the Things which I say. The Terms indeed are different, but the Meaning is the same. For did not our blessed Redeemer often assure us, that he only came to say, and to do the Will of his Father? Was not his coming, and living, and dying, and rising again in the Flesh, the Effect of Gods secret Will from all Eternity? And his Teaching was the Publication of God's reveal'd Will to Mankind.

2dly, In both Places the same Phrase, *Saying to me, calling me, Lord, Lord*, is used, and repeated. By which is signified the most publick owning of Christianity; our acknowledging the Truth of his Gospel; and (as the best Interpreters expound

expound it) some kind of true Belief in him too, as the Great Lord of Heaven, and Earth, and the only Author, and Finisher of our Faith.

3dly, That which he prefers before such a Profession, and such a Belief, he calls *Doing* the Will of my Father, *Doing* the Things which I say; that is, honestly, and heartily, without Reserve, with earnest Intention, and undissembled Diligence, to practise the Commands of Christ, as the *Sayings* of the most Divine Law-giver, and as the *Will* of God himself.

According to which Explanation of these Words, the whole Substance of both Texts may be contained in one general Proposition.

That in order to our being the true Disciples of Christ; to our partaking the great Fruit of his Death, and Intercession, which is the *Kingdom of Heaven*; 'tis not enough, that we constantly profess his Religion, nor that we stedfastly believe it to be true; unless to a steddy Profession, to a Faith unfeigned, we add a conscientious Obedience to his Laws.

Now towards our right Understanding the full Importance of this weighty Truth, and applying it to our own

Hearts, and Consciences, be pleased that I draw it into Three particular Conclusions.

First, That our outward Profession of the Faith, *our saying to, and calling Christ Lord*, was not in the least reprehended in these Words, but only compared, and made inferior to something else, that is of greater Concernment in Religion; our *Doing the Will of his Father*.

2dly, That it is possible for our Saviour's Followers, in some Sense, to *do the Will of God*; in some such Sense, as shall be accepted of God himself, and by him rewarded, in the Kingdom of Heaven, with that *Life, and Immortality, which was brought to Light in the Gospel, the Doctrine of that Kingdom*.

3dly, That it is not only possible, but absolutely necessary for all Christians, not only to call on Christ's Name, not only to assent to, and believe his Doctrine, but to *do the Will of God, and the Things our Saviour hath said*: The *Doing* those Things being that alone, which can make us Christians, not only in Name, but in Deed.

First

First then, the Reason, and Purport of the Negative Part of my Text, is rightly to be stated. *Not every one that says unto me, Lord; Why call ye me Lord?* It was not here objected against any of our Lord's Hearers, as a Fault, that they solemnly owned his Doctrine, and declared themselves Believers of it: That could not be; But the Case was thus:

Our Blessed Saviour, in all his Precepts, so earnestly endeavoured to free the World from a Pharisaical Religion, to persuade Men to an uncounterfeit Holiness; that oftentimes, in Comparison to this, he seemed to undervalue, and to speak somewhat slightly of the outward Forms, and Shews of Religion: whereby he did never intend to condemn any of the External Expressions of Godliness, but only to give the Internal Sincerity a due Place, and Preference before them, as undoubtedly it deserves.

Thus he says, *Wo to you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites; for ye make clean the outside of the Cup, and of the Platter. The Wo is not denounced against their washing the Outside, but their outward Hypocritical Cleanness; whilst they defiled the Inside, within they were full of*

Extortion, and Excess: else their cleansing the Outside had been allowable, nay very commendable.

Let none be deceived: A Decency, and Purity of Life, and a Comeliness of Worship, as it was all along enjoined in the Law, so it was far from being forbidden, or threatened; it was always enjoined too in the Gospel. Our most Holy Religion is also pure and undefiled: The visible Solemnity of its most Spiritual Offices in Publick Worship, was here frequently encouraged, never reprov'd, but only Mens resting in that alone. 'Tis true, without Reality, all Ceremony is Hypocrisie: but with Reality, a well-moderated Ceremony is the Ornament of Devotion, as inward Affection is the Life of it.

St. Matt.
23. 23.

Thus also our Saviour says, *Wo to you, Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites; For ye pay Tythe of Mint, and Anise, and Cummin. The Curse is not levelled against their most punctual Observance of these small Things; but their neglecting the Great. He adds, These Things ye ought to have done, yet not to leave the other undone: That is, to have done them both, but not both with an equal Zeal, and Application. The Exception is made against Mens pleading their Earnestness,*
and

and Exactness of Things of less Moment, for their Excuse, for their Praise, when they *omitted the weightier Things of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith.*

Thus likewise our Lord repeats and confirms what God, by the Prophet, had said before; *I will have Mercy, and* St. Matt. 9. 13. *not Sacrifice.* And not Sacrifice! What, Hos. 6. 6. will not God accept of Sacrifice? Did not he prescribe to the *Jews* every Part, and Circumstance of their Sacrifices? And does he not now expect from us, not only a Spiritual, but a Bodily Worship to succeed in their Place? Does he require Mercy, and despise Worship? No; He only refuses that Worship, where Mercy is wanting: When Religion is made the Pretence, or Cover of Rapine, Cruelty, or Sacrilege: When either the Observance, or Forbearance of some particular Temporary Institutions of it is made destructive to the great Law of Charity; which is of Universal, and Eternal Obligation.

And by this Measure we are to interpret my Text: *Not every one that says unto me, Lord: Why call ye me Lord? What could be their Offence in so saying, and so calling him? Were they not all bound to call him so? Does not our Lord himself, who Loved, and practised*

aised Promising, and Blessing, far more than Threatning, and Cursing? Yet, Does not he threaten, that he will leave them under the most heavy Curse, who shall deny him, or be ashamed of him and his Words before Men? He will deny them, and be ashamed of them, when he shall come in his own Glory, and in his Fathers, and of the Holy Angels.

St. Mark
8. 38.

St. Luke
9. 26.

It cannot therefore be the Professing of Christianity, but the bare Professing it, and Mens contradicting that Profession in their Works, that is here censur'd. Our Saviour regards not our calling him Lord, except we will submit to his Dominion; commands us not to give him that Majestick Title in empty Compliment, but to obey his Authority as our Lord; not by calling our selves Christians, his holy and elect Children, and yet living unsuitable, ungodly Lives, to discredit his Faith: but to undergo the great Obligations of Christians; and so to let his Faith have the Credit, as most certainly it has in it self the Power, of Amending our Lives.

For he wisely, and divinely foresaw, that more Dishonour was like to rebound to his excellent Religion, by the wicked and vicious Practises of its counterfeit

counterfeit Friends, than from all the most malicious Objections of its open, and declared Enemies. We know, the Gospel irresistibly prevailed of old, above the Jewish Shadows, and Traditions, against the Heathen Wisdom and Empire. And still we need not fear what the Jewish, or Heathen, or Mahometan World could do, or devise against the *Power of Godliness*; if there were more *Power of Godliness* in the Christian World. Christianity is for ever Invincible from without: It is only in Danger from within, of being weaken'd, and undermined by the Loosness and Treachery of its own Members.

Alas! has not the Christian Church always run the greatest Hazards from Men, who pretend to its Communion; from the Dissentions, the Animosities, the Schisms, the corrupt Opinions, and Conversations of Christians? As Christ himself was betray'd by one, who dip'd with him in the same Dish, who *kissed him, and called him Lord and Master*.

Wherefore to forewarn us of this, was his chief Intention in this, and other the like Scriptures: So that from his questioning them, *Why they call'd him Lord, and did not what he said*; we are only to learn, which of these he prefer'd

prefer'd before the other; not to conclude that he rejected the other. Our *calling him Lord*, our dutiful acknowledging of his Faith, he did never reject, but always require. We are obliged to *call him Lord*, if we believe him to be so. We must bear, and appear to others to bear his Cross, if we will have any Share in his Kingdom. 'Tis true, from the Emptiness of the Heart, the Mouth may sound: and sometimes perhaps the Louder, because of that Emptiness. But yet out of the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth will, and must speak. I grant there may be, and, God knows, too often is an outward Profession, where there is no inward Belief. But where-ever there is an inward Belief, there will be an outward Profession; there should be a manifest Declaration of that Belief, by such a Worship, and Devotion, such a reasonable Service, that, in the Visible, as well as Invisible Part of it, becomes Men, rational Creatures, to offer up to God; and such also as is fit for God to receive, who is a *God of Order, and not of Confusion*.

That is my First Particular; Our *saying so, our calling Christ, Lord*, is expected, and commanded. Only it is of less

less Efficacy to Salvation, than our *doing the Will of his Father.*

And may we not hence, in passing, recollect, That if our Gracious and Merciful Lord himself did so severely reprove all those Professors of his Faith, who, though they readily called him Lord, and ranked themselves in the Number of his Disciples; yet went not on to live, and act, as became that Holy Profession, to which they had given up their Names: What Opinion then must our Saviour have, what Judgment will he pass at the last Day, on all those his seeming Followers, who go not so far in the Ways of God, and Goodness, as they did, whom he so sharply here reprehended, and, in a manner, rejected? If he cursed the Fig-Tree that bore no Fruit, and condemned it never to bear Fruit more; What will he say to them, who bear not so much as Leaves?

What shall become of them, who whilst they scruple not to boast their being Christians, yet are so far from minding to *do what Christ has said*, that they seldom, or never seriously call him Lord? If the most diligent and assiduous Attending on the Publick, and Private Service of God, will not save us alone;

What

What Hope then can they have, what Blessing can they expect, who are notoriously Defective even in that? What Condemnation must they deserve, who come short in that very Duty, which, at best, by it self, comes short of Salvation? Except it be accompanied with our *doing the Will of our Heavenly Father.*

And what is this *Will of God* to be done by us? You have heard, it is the same with *the Things our Saviour has said.* That is, in short, It is the perfect Rule prescribed us in his Word, concerning our Behaviour towards God, our Selves, and other Men; comprehending all his Precepts of Manners and Piety; those new Evangelical Commands, which he himself introduced; those Moral Laws, which he confirmed; those Natural Laws, which he continued; yea, he advanced, and heightened both these Last, and incorporated them into the Gospel: Which therefore is altogether a Doctrine so universal, that it omits not any the least Religious Duty; so Holy, that it admits not of any the least Mixture of Sin.

This is the *Will of God*, These the *Things our Saviour has said.* But how shall I now make good my Second Inference?

Inference? How is it possible for us to do all this?

Alas! they that seriously study, and truly know their own Hearts, must needs confess, that they cannot do it. And they that neither know, nor study their own Hearts, have not they far more Reason to confess, that they cannot? Alas! the Impenitent never regard the Performance of it; and are not the most Penitent, even by being so, conscious to themselves of the Breach of it?

Could the Doing of all this have been within the Power of our own Nature? No: That will rather retard, and overthrow, than promote the Doing of these Things. From our Nature, as it is, Corrupted, we may rather look for the Violation of every one, than the accurate Practice of all the Christian Rules. From Humane Nature, as it should and might be of it self, corrected by good Education, and Discipline, ennobled by the Principles of Prudence and Virtue, and Honour; even thus we could only expect at most the Doing what it self teaches, never what a higher, Supernatural Law-giver commands.

Can

Rom. 2.
13.

Can any Man therefore stand before a Judge so Righteous? Can any Creature be clear in the Sight of God, who cannot but discover the least Iniquity; and yet *cannot indure to behold any*? Must we not all yield, that if *not the Hearers of the Law, but the Doers of it shall be justified*, none shall be justified? That if the *Calling* our Saviour, Lord, be too little for us to do, the *Doing what he says* is far too much for us to undertake?

In this deplorable Distress, which Way should we have turned our selves? To what can we have Recourse for Assistance? To what, but to the Gracious Favour, the boundless Mercies of the same Saviour? His bloody Sweat, his pierced Hands, his wounded Side, his dying Heart, his meritorious Death? That only is able to make this difficult Work possible: And if we will contribute our Part, our very little Part, and of it self very inconsiderable, however then it will make this Work, not only possible, but easie.

Be pleased then to take this along with you, that our *doing* what our Saviour has said, that is, the whole Will of God, may be either tried by the Dispensation of the Law, or the Gospel.

The Legal Rule of old, exacted an entire Perfection in every Part of Mens Practice : Which it is Rashness for any Man, on his own Single Strength to attempt, impossible to effect. The Evangelical Rule requires the doing what we do, with Integrity ; and the doing it, not by any Trust in our own Sufficiency, but in the Succour of the Divine Power, and inestimable Love. Let but the Sense that we have done Ill, and the Striving to do Well, be our own ; though not properly our own neither, but in a Gospel Sense our own ; and then the well doing will be superadded by the Favour of God himself.

And here is the great Distinction between the First Covenant, and the Second. In the First Covenant, that of Works, Mankind was for it self, by it self to obey all the Laws of its Maker ; and was to expect no Reward, but on such a compleat Obedience, and so inexcusably failed, and deserve the Punishment of that Failure.

In the Second Covenant, this of Grace we do not alone attempt the hazardous Work : But we have a Mediator to bear our Sins ; to supply us with Divine Grace. We are here too to take upon us, but not alone to take upon

us, the Fulfilling the Law of God. If we will earnestly endeavour it, and persist in the Endeavour with unwearyed Perseverance, then that God, who would have been the Punisher of what we break, or neglect, and must be, if any, the Rewarder of what we perform, that God is as it were joined with us in the Obligation; is engaged by a never-failing Promise of one who is Truth it self, and therefore cannot lye, to help our Inabilities, to pass by our Omissions, to pardon our Transgressions.

Ephes. 3. 18. How then can we ever be able sufficiently to Admire, *how to Comprehend with all Saints, what is the Breadth, and Length, and Depth, and Height; and to know the Love of Christ, which passeth Knowledge?* According to this happy Design of the Gospel, the whole Sum of God's Laws, and of our Obedience, is represented to us in a New, and far different Way, in a less terrible, in the most comfortable Appearance.

By this merciful Standard, he is judged to do all the Will of God, equivalent to all, who does what he does with an upright Heart, who unfeignedly strives to do more, and when he does most, is heartily grieved he does so little

tle. Here a true Repentance passes for Performance, and will grow up to it: A sincere Performance is taken for Perfection, and will end in it. The Deed is commanded: But the Will is often accepted for the Deed, by him, who both makes us to Will, and to Do of his good Pleasure.

Under the Law, the Task was rigorously exacted; but far less Provision made for Help to aid, or Strength to sustain, or Reward to encourage the Doers of it. Under the Gospel much more is to be done, many new Commands are imposed: Yet the Work it self is much more feasible: if we will Labour in good earnest, our Infirmities will be supported, our Temptations brought within Compass, our Sins forgiven, our Spiritual Enemies overcome, and Heavenly Grace bestowed upon us by him, whose *Grace is sufficient for us*.

There the greatest Righteousness, that Men of themselves could attain to, was deficient. Here, indeed, the greatest Righteousness of our own is not meritorious: Yet the least shall be rewarded, if pure and unfeigned, and *sprinkled with the Blood of the immaculate Lamb*. That Lamb of God has taken on himself our Offences; and will impute to

Esa. 53.
5. us his own Merits: To bring about which happy Exchange, it is he only, not we, that has suffered. *By his Stripes we are healed, the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him.* He was punished for what we do ill; and what we do well, we do it not, but *Christ that strengthens us*: Yet not he, but we alone shall receive the Recompence of what he enables us to do.

Thus by the wonderful Compassion, the unspeakable Condescension of God himself, you see, 'tis possible for us frail and sinful Creatures, *to do the Will of God, and the Things our Saviour has said.*

But what immediately follows upon this? Certainly that it is not only possible, but unavoidably necessary for us all *to do* those Things. And seeing our Duty appears to be so possible, we ought the more to be convinced of the Necessity of it; lest the Craft of the Devil, and the ill Inclinations of our own Hearts, should make use of this Possibility, not as an Argument to encourage our Industry, and Watchfulness over our own Hearts and Lives, but to increase our Negligence, and Spiritual Pride; for too many have turned *the Grace of God it self into Lasciviousness.*

Jude 4.

• Where-

Wherefore as the Possibility of doing this may justly serve to prevent our Despair, and to raise our Hopes; so the Necessity of our doing it may well keep us from Carelessness, or Arrogance. And ought not the joint Consideration both of the Possibility and Necessity to excite our utmost Endeavours, not only in the Belief, but in the Practice of Religion? This being, not as some have esteemed it, only a Legal, but the true Evangelical Way to Heaven.

I doubt not but you are sensible on what dangerous and slippery Ground I am now walking. You cannot be ignorant, that as the several Parties, and Divisions of *Christendom*, for their own private Interests, not for the Benefit of the whole Christian Church, have disordered the great Doctrines of Faith and Works, it is very difficult to speak of them without some Offence, without falling into some one or other of the Snares that have been laid in these Paths, which should have been the least Intricate, the most Direct, the smoothest Paths to Eternal Life.

Is there any one Article of Religion, that ought to have been freer from the Devices, and cross Inventions of Men?

That ought to have been delivered more plainly and simply, and entertained with less Dispute, than the great fundamental Truth, of the good Agreement, and Correspondence of Belief, and Practice towards Salvation? And yet there is scarce any one of all the Doctrines of Christ, wherein the Fancies of Men have been more Luxuriant, and their Opinions more Contradictory and Perplexed. Scarce in any one other Point could our Dissentions have been more hazardous: Yet in no other, that I know of, have Christians more dissented among themselves; and that almost in every Communion.

To repair these Breaches, to restore Unity to all *Christendom* in these Questions, is above the Reach of the highest Understanding, beyond the Ability of the largest Charity. That can only now be the Subject of our Wishes and Prayers, but not of our Hopes, on any Ground of Human Probability.

However, thus far we of this Church have Reason to bless and praise Almighty God, that from the very Beginning of the Reformation, it was by him at first directed, and has ever since continued in the most Temperate, and therefore Orthodox Judgment, in these weighty

weighty Points; whereof the very Weight, unduly poized, has carried too many others to the one or the other Extreme.

And though there be very many Proofs, yet there can be none greater, of the Christian Moderation, the truly Catholick Charity, the Divine Assistance, by which our Church has been ever since guided to this very Day, than that it has been able to avoid all those fatal Rocks, on all Sides of it, in these Controversies, on which so many of its Adversaries have splitted; either, on the one Side, by extolling Works to the obscuring of Grace, and the weakening of Faith by Merit; or, on the other, by advancing an idle arrogant Faith, and thinking too meanly of all manner of Morality, in a pretended Fear of placing Merit in good Works, but indeed, in a real Fear of going to the Pains and Charge of them.

But our Church, according to its usual Temper in all other Points of Religion, judging from the uniform Voice of the Scripture, and the Consent of uncorrupt Antiquity, not from any present Heat of false Inspiration, or Prospect of Secular Profit, or Interest, in this also has held the Scales with so even a Hand,

as to allow both to Faith and Works their full Due, without suffering them to invade each others Province; and having once determined on the right Way and Purpose of using and applying both, as it has thenceforth, it is never jealous of any ill Effects, which the largest Measures either of our Belief, or Practice, can produce.

Now then, according to the Excellent Instruction of so sure a Guide, my Third and Last Particular is to make out the necessary Obligations we all lie under, not only to believe the Doctrinal, but to do the Practical Things of Religion.

First, indeed, I must again repeat that, which can never be too frequently inculcated on our Memories, as being the most certain, the only Foundation of this whole Doctrine; that neither our strongest, our truest Belief in our Saviour's Word, or Merits, nor our most compleat doing his Will, and Sayings, are of themselves able to save us, as they proceed from us, as they are the Thoughts or Actions of our own Minds, or Hearts, or Hands, but only as they are sanctified by his Death, and wrought by his Holy Spirit in us.

This

This seems to be undeniably manifest from the whole Tenor of the Gospel, which very frequently declares, That only the Price of his most Precious Blood, and the Imputation of his unvaluable Righteousness, can Atonement for the best of our Thoughts and Deeds, and make them acceptable; nay, even tolerable in the Sight of God.

Far be it then from us to imagine, that our Salvation can be deserved by our selves; that any Degree of our Faith, or Hope, or Charity, can of it self, for its own Value, be effectual to so high an End. Eternal Life, in the Kingdom of Heaven, is due to neither of them on their own Account, as a Reward, which they have any Right of themselves to challenge, but only as it was purchased for us by God the Son, and therefore promised by God the Father.

It is that Promise of God the Father, founded on his Son's Mediation and Satisfaction, which alone can give us Assurance to lay hold on the Mercy of God. That, indeed, goes much farther, gives us Boldness even to appeal to his Justice, and, upon some Terms, to claim our Salvation from it. But without that Purchase of the Son, and Promise of the Father, God's very Mercy

cy were an unapproachable, his Justice were a terrible Attribute; without that Purchase, and that Promise, his Mercy it self could not be for us; his Justice would have been directly against us; without them, our best Works were but polluted Imperfections; our firmest Faith were but a groundless Presumption.

But now, Secondly, it may be safely added, That although neither our believing aright, nor our doing well, are of themselves sufficient, as they come from us, yet as they are both hallowed, and presented to God by him, who is *our great High Priest*, so considered, they are both effectual, and both of absolute Necessity to Salvation.

They are both, I say, necessary. How, in what Manner, or to what Degree, it is hard to define: But the main Truth it self should be fixed, and unquestionable, that they are both necessary. And it is in this Case as in all other Religious Matters, from the main Truth it self, not from any Nice or Subtil Speculation of the Manner of it, that the great Benefit will arise to our Souls, to help our Unbelief, to animate our Diligence.

That

That Faith is necessary, I need not here spend Time in proving; this Truth, among us, being confess'd by all. The great Doubt has been, concerning the Practical Effects of Faith; most of those, who deny them to be necessary, fancying that they cannot be so, but only on the account of Merit. And there lies the Error: For the Works of Piety, and Charity, may be, and are many Ways necessary, yet not in the least Meritorious.

They are not only necessary to a Christian Life, for the Benefit of Mankind in general, for the Conviction of Gain-sayers, for the Conversion of the prophane World, for the Honour of the Gospel, *that Men seeing your good Works, St. Matt. may glorify your Father which is in Hea-5.16.*

ven; but they are necessary, as the only Signs to distinguish the True Faith from the False; and as Productions that infallibly will grow upon the True. They are not only necessary, as the Means, and Matter of our Sanctification, but as the indispensable Condition, though not the Cause, of our Justification. A Condition, I say, on our Parts, which is therefore indispensable, because required of us by the positive and frequent Commands of our Blessed Saviour,

Saviour, who, unquestionably, had Power to impose what Terms he pleased on that Salvation, which he alone was to bestow, and had bought at so dear a Rate.

For these, and other such Reasons, our *doing the Will* of God, and our Obedience to our Lord's Precepts, is necessary, without any the least Thought of Meriting by it, or without being in the least apt to incline Men to think so, if all this be Evangelically done. Let us but *do* what Christ and his Heavenly Father have enjoined us, in a right Manner, to a right End, and the whole Design of the Gospel will absolve us from any Danger of intruding; will free us from any Desire to intrude on his All-sufficient Satisfaction: Nay, rather quite the contrary.

They who shall obey God's Laws, in the Way that he has traced out, will be so far from presuming they can thereby deserve any Thing, much more from thinking they can supererrogate, that they are the only Men rightly disposed to distrust themselves, and to be deeply sensible they can never do enough. None but good Works, falsely good, arrogantly done, singly relied on, can provoke Men to a proud, over-weening

ing Confidence of Merit; and so Men may Err the same Way, in respect of Faith it self. There may be an Excess in trusting to the single Interest, and Operation of some kind of Faith, as much as in confiding in the single Efficacy, or Deserts of any kind of good Work.

Thirdly, Therefore as a Belief in the Divine Truths, and a Practical Obedience to the Divine Laws, may both be equally abused, and yet are in themselves both necessary when they are not abused; so they are not only both necessary, but they do not in the least cross or hinder, they mutually assist, and promote each other; indeed, they are both always inseparable.

And the Method of the great Mystery of our Redemption will make this apparent, our Lord Christ did pay a Ransom equal to the Sins of the whole World: None can enjoy the Benefit of that Ransom, unless they apprehend it by a lively Faith. No Faith can be lively, except it *work by Love*, except it be Active, and growing in a Charitable, and Holy Life.

And thus all might be reconciled, Christ is the only Author of our Salvation:

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vation : Faith is the principal Instrument, as I may call it, of conveying it to us. Works are the certain Consequences, the Evidences, the Life, the Consummation of a Saving Faith.

I say it again : Had it not been for the Propitiatory Death of the great Messiah, there had been no Salvation for any Man. *His is the only saving Name under Heaven* ; without my Faith to lay hold on that Propitiation, there will be no Salvation for me ; without my living answerably, my Faith were dead, and useless. If there were no Mediator between God, and Man, there could be no Ground for our Hopes to grow upon. If there be no Faith, there can be no Root of our Hopes. If there be no good Life, there will be no Fruit of them. And let us all beware. For in the Words immediately before my Text, our Saviour lays this down, as the only distinguishing Character, between his genuine Disciples, and Hypocrites, *By their Fruits ye shall know them.*

The Conclusion of the whole Matter is this. That is the only fixed, thriving, saving Religion, where neither of these is wanting. A true Christian Faith, and true Christian Works, do
not

not only well agree; but cannot indeed disagree. From that Faith which is defective towards our Justification, Works may be distinguished, they may be divided; and that Division makes the Defect. But of that Faith which is sufficient, Works are a very material Part; they seem to be the Last, the Finishing Part, the very Perfection of it in this World.

This is the old, secure, certain Method of Salvation; This the only direct, unerring Way to Heaven; This the Doctrine, which with one Voice, and one Consent, our Church teaches and professes. This Doctrine let us profess: But let us not only profess it. Let us not fatally mistake in placing our eternal Safety on either of these Things separated, which can only be efficacious, when they are united.

See, I pray, how exactly in all these Particulars, the Author to the *Hebrews* has described the whole Compass of our Duty in this respect. *Let us hold fast the Profession of our Faith without wavering.* There is our Professing, and Believing him to be the Lord. *Let us consider one another to provoke unto Love, and to good Works.* There is our Doing, and our careful Endeavours that others should

Heb. 10.
Ver. 23.
Ver. 24.

should do the Will of God; by Love, and good Works; which (if I might be allowed) I will venture to call the very Will of the Will of God, in relation to our Practice towards Men.

And after all, he adds, that we should
Ver. 25. *not forsake the Assembling our selves together*; in order still to call him Lord.

Such are the regular Steps that lead us in the Way to Life and Happiness. Works must proceed from Faith. Faith must come by Hearing, hearing the Word of God: the Word of God, either as it is spoken from God to the People, in the Churches teaching whereby our Saviour is declared to be the Lord; or spoken to God again by the People in the Churches Prayers, wherein he is owned to be so!

Thus then let us acknowledge our Lord's Redemption openly, and cheerfully, as Glorifying in the Cross, which was once the Scandal of the World. Let us lay hold on the Merits of his Death, and apply its Virtues to our selves. But then let us not sit down, and do no more, and go no farther, than such a general Affiance in his Redemption, or bold Application of his Merits to our selves.

Let

Let us adore his Ever-Blessed Name without ceasing. Let us affectionately perform all the publick Duties of his Worships and Practice. But let us not think it enough, only to observe the publick Part of them. For although all true Christians are bound to do that, yet even Hypocrites may counterfeite it.

Let us call him Lord, according to the irreproveable Use and Institutions of our own Church; according to the Primitive Soundness of its Faith, and Sacraments; to the Apostolical Antiquity of its Ministry and Government; the Catholick, and Truly-Christian Extent of its Charity; the intelligible, decent, and spiritual Manner of its Devotions.

In all these, let us continue unmoveably firm against the manifold Corruptions of its Adversaries. Yet let us not only employ our Time and Thoughts to oppose them in Words, but to adorn this by our Works. Let us remember that Religion consists not only in Negative, but also in Affirmative Duties; not so much in Censuring others for what they say, or do ill, as in Saying and Doing well our selves; not so much in Discovering the Errors of other

Churches, as in Believing the Truths,
and Obeying the Rules of our own
Church.

Let us cherish in our Souls a constant
and stable Belief in the Divine Promi-
ses and Truths, but let us not set up
our Rest in a naked, amature Belief. For
not only Hypocrites, but the Devils
themselves, may have some kind of
Faith: It is said, *The Devils believe*.
But it is never said, they wrought any
good Work. Faith they may have in
some Sort; Real Goodness they cannot
have in any. And what it is easier for
the Devils themselves to attain to, is it
not also possible for them to make even
wicked Men to imitate? *of its Charity*

But let us expect to be saved only
by the Way, which Christ himself has
appointed; by a particular Trust in his
Atonement, and also, in some Sense,
by our own Actions of Humility and
Charity; by his sufferings, and so, in
some Sense, by our own Obedience. In
a very slender Sense indeed it is our
own. The Evil of it is too truly ours;
the Good is entirely our Saviour's, who
in his most gracious Interpretation, he
permits us to call it ours, yet yet and yet

There is no Question, who he has
sufficiently wrought out our Salvation
for

for us. Yet we too are expressly commanded to work out our Salvation. In *Philip. 2.* what Manner are we to work? *With* ^{12.} *Fear, and Trembling*; which allows no Place for ill-grounded Assurance, or presumptuous Security. For what Reason are we to work? It follows, *for it is God that works in us both to will, and to do.* We are to work, because God works: For which very Pretence, too many have thought that they need not work at all. *God works in us, both the Will and the Deed.* What then remains for us to work? Yes, very much. His freest Grace is not inconsistent with our Performance of the least of our Duties; rather it is the most powerful Argument to awaken us to our Duty.

He has done all for us. And the more he has done, the more ought we to do. It is confessed, we can do nothing that will Merit any Thing. But we ought to do all in Obedience, and Gratitude, and the more so, because Christ himself has provided, that we shall need no other Merit but his.

And is not the whole Word of God full of Exhortations to such a kind of fruitful Religion? Not only the positive Precepts, but the very Similitudes of it are enough to inform us, which

is the true Holiness, that God will Accept and Reward. For throughout the Gospel, a Christian Life is seldom compared to any Art meerly Contemplative; never to any idle, or useless Course of Living, but often to Travelling, to Husbandry, to Digging in a Vineyard, to Plowing and Sowing, to Building, to a Warfare, and the like. All of them Ways of Life, that consist not in meer Speculation, or Talking, and Professing; but in Practice and industrious Pains; All of them laborious Callings, and profitable not only to themselves, but to the World in General.

Those Joys of Heaven to which we all aspire, and which as many of us as are wise will provide for, are often called in Scripture, a *Rest from our Labours*, the *Prize of our high Calling*, the *End of our Race*, and the like. And what does all this teach us, but that in this Life we should labour, and with frequent Contention, with indefatigable Ambition, strive, and run in the Ways of God's Commandments?

Consider, I beseech you, what are the Two great Pleas to the Kingdom of Heaven, recorded in the Gospel, where of our Lord Christ himself will read
the

the one, and allow the other, at the Day
of Judgment.

What Plea will he reject? In the Words
next after my Text, it is written, *Many* Ver. 22.
will say to me in that Day, Lord, Lord, have
me not. By the way here also these

Hypocrites did twice repeat this Word
of Respect, saying, *Lord, Lord.* Where-
as I do not remember, that his true Dis-
ciples did any where salute him more
than singly, *Lord, or Master.* An Hy-
pocrite will be sure to say enough, ra-
ther too much than too little, and Over-
saying, may, Over-doing, is a quite dif-
ferent Thing from saying or doing
well. But — *Many will say to me in that*

Day, Lord, Lord, have me not prophesied
in thy Name? and *in thy Name have cast*
out Devils? and *in thy Name done many*
wonderful Things? But then says he, *I*
will profess to them, I never knew you, de-
part from me, ye that work Iniquity. Ye
that work Iniquity. We do not find
he denies, that they had those extraor-
dinary Abilities; but we do find, they
were of no Consideration with him,
because their ordinary Works were
Evil.

That is the Plea he will refuse; what
will he approve? In St. *Matth.* 25. 'tis St. *Matt.*
said, *That when the Son of Man shall come* 25. 31.

in his Glory, and all the holy Angels with him, then he shall sit upon the Throne of his Glory. And before him shall be gathered all Nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a Shepherd divideth his Sheep from the Goats; and he shall set the Sheep on his Right Hand, but the Goats on the Left. Then shall the King say to them on his Right Hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World.

In so solemn an Appearance of God, Angels, and Men, in so great an Expectation, what is the Cause of this most gracious Invitation? What the Ground of their Title to this most glorious Inheritance? It presently follows.

For, say he, I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink. I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me. I was sick, and ye visited me. I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

They really had done all this in our Saviour's Sense. But so far were they from an undue Confidence of deserving Heaven by it, that they doubted, they feared they had not done it. Lord, say they, when saw we thee an hungry, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

when

when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? He pities their Fears, he clears up their Doubts? He most mercifully answers, *Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my Brethren, ye have done it to me.* Of which I beseech Heaven

Thus, you perceive, whilst even Supernatural Gifts alone may be defective; whilst even the Power of Miracles it self will not serve the Turn; the honest and plain Actions of Piety, and Charity, performed to the least Member of our Lord's Mystical Body, for his Sake, have a true and undoubted Title to Salvation.

And if without doing this, and whatever else our Saviour has said, the very prophesying of Things to come, the casting out of Devils, the doing many wonderful Things, and all this in Christ's Name, are not sufficient; what then is a meer verbal Repeating of his Name, or a bare Approbation of, and Consent to his Doctrine, without doing what he has said?

Wherefore, that our Claim may be sure to that Everlasting Kingdom, let us imitate his Example, and obey his

Gospel, in not omitting the Professing Part of Religion; but yet in preferring the Believing, and the Practising Part far before it. Let us call him Lord, but chiefly let us do the Things he has said. Not only by saying to him, Lord, but by doing the Will of his Father, let us strive to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Of which, I beseech Almighty GOD to make us all Partakers. Perpetual Gifts alone may be given; whilst even the Power of Miracles it self will not serve the Turn; the honest and plain Actions of Piety, and Charity, performed by the least Member of our Lord's Mystical Body, for his sake, have a true and undoubted Title

to Salvation. And if without doing this, and what ever else our Salvation has said, the very prophesying of Things to come, the casting out of Devils, the doing many wonderful Things, and all this in Christ's Name, are not sufficient; what then is a meer verbal Repeating of his Name, or a bare Approbation of, and Consent to his Doctrine, without doing what he has

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